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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS

OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF
THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
AND
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,
BY THE
REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

VOL. IX.
IN TWENTY-THREE VOLUMES.

LONDON:
JAMES DUNCAN, 37, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXXX.

PRAGMATICAL WORKS

THE REV. RICHARD BAYTER

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A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

REV. RICHARD BAYTER

LONDON:

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BOLT-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

REV. WILLIAM CHURCH

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF RICHARD BAYTER, ESQ."

IN THIRTY-THREE VOLUMES

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MDCCCXX

THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

VOLUME IX.

CONTAINING

**THE RIGHT METHOD FOR A SETTLED PEACE OF CONSCIENCE AND
SPIRITUAL COMFORT ; THE CRUCIFYING OF THE WORLD
BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST.**

VOL. IX.

A

REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

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THE SECOND PART

OF THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORYING.

Part I. The Christian must with abhorrence renounce all carnal glorying, and must glory only in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to them, and they to the world. Particulars. 1. True Christians that are crucified to the world, and the world to them, by the cross of Christ, may and must glory therein. How far, and how far not, is proved by Scripture and Christian reason.

THE
RIGHT METHOD

FOR
A SETTLED PEACE OF CONSCIENCE

AND
SPIRITUAL COMFORT.

IN THIRTY-TWO DIRECTIONS.

"God is love."

1 JOHN IV. 16.

"Come, for all things are now ready."

LUKE XIV. 17. MATT. XXII. 4.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

MATT. XI. 28.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the thing that ye would."

GAL. V. 17.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

ROM. VI. 16.

"Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

ROM. XIII. 14.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

ROM. VIII. 13.

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption : for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

2 PET. II. 19.

"Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

EZEK. XXXIII. 10, 11.

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God."

2 COR. V. 20.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good, &c. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

PSAL. XXXVII. 3, 4.

Sound doctrine makes a sound judgment, a sound heart, a sound conversion, and a sound conscience.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my much valued, beloved, and honoured Friends, Colonel JOHN BRIDGES, with Mrs. MARGARET BRIDGES, his wife, and Mr. THOMAS FOLEY, with Mrs. ANNE FOLEY, his wife.

THOUGH in publishing our writings, we intend them for the good of all : yet custom, not without reason, doth teach us, sometimes to direct them more especially to some. Though one only had the original interest in these papers, yet do I now direct them to you all, as not knowing how in this to separate you. You dwell together in my estimation and affection : one of you a member of the church, which I must teach, and legally the patron of its maintenance and minister : the other, a special branch of that family, which I was first indebted to in this county. You lately joined in presenting to the parliament, the petition of this county for the Gospel and a faithful ministry. When I only told you of my intention, of sending some poor scholars to the university, you freely and jointly offered your considerable annual allowance thereto, and that for the continuance of my life, or their necessities there. I will tell the world of this, whether you will or no ; not for your applause, but for their imitation ; and the shame of many of far greater estates, that will not be drawn to do the like. The season somewhat aggravates the goodness of your works. When satan hath a design to burn up those nurseries, you are watering God's plants ; when the greedy mouth of sacrilege is gaping for their maintenance, you are voluntarily adding for the supply of its defect. Who knows how many souls they may win to Christ (if God shall send them forth into his

harvest) whom you have thus assisted ? And what an addition to your comfort this may be ? When the Gospel is so undermined, and the ministry so maligned, and their maintenance so envied, you have, as the mouth of this county, appeared for them all. What God will yet do with us, we cannot tell ; but if he will continue his Gospel to us, you may have the greater comfort in it. If he will remove it, and forsake a proud, unworthy, false-hearted people, yet may you have the comfort of your sincere endeavours ; you (with the rest that sincerely furthered it) may escape the gnawings of conscience, and the public curse and reproach which the history of this age may fasten upon them, who after all their engagements in blood and covenants, would either in ignorant fury, or malicious subtlety, or base temporizing cowardice, oppugn or undermine the Gospel, or in perfidious silence look on whilst it is destroyed. But because it is not the work of a flatterer that I am doing, but of a friend, I must second these commendations with some caution and counsel, and tell yourselves of your danger and duty, as I tell others of your exemplary deeds. Truly, the sad experiences of these times, have much abased my confidence in man, and caused me to have lower thoughts of the best than sometime I have had. I confess I look on man, as such a distempered, slippery and inconstant thing, and of such a natural mutability of apprehensions and affections, that as I shall never more call any man on earth my friend, but with a supposition that he may possibly become mine enemy ; so I shall never be so confident of any man's fidelity to Christ, as not withal to suspect that he may possibly forsake him. Nor shall I boast of any man's service for the Gospel, but with a jealousy that he may be drawn to do as much against it (though God, who knows the heart, and knows his own decrees, may know his sincerity, and fore-know his perseverance). Let me therefore remember you, that had you expended your whole estates, and the blood of your hearts for Christ and his Gospel, he will not take himself beholden to you. He oweth you no thanks for your deepest engagements, highest adventures, greatest cost, or utmost endeavours. You are sure beforehand that you shall be no losers by him : your seeming hazards increase your security : your losses are your gain : your giving is your receiving : your expenses are your revenues : Christ returns

the largest usury. The more you do and suffer for him, the more you are beholden to him. I must also remember you, that you may possibly live to see the day, when it will cost you dearer to shew yourselves faithful to the Gospel, ordinances and ministers of Christ, than now it doth ; and that many have shrunk in greater trials, that past through lesser with resolution and honour. Your defection at the last, would be the loss of all your works and hopes. “ If any man draw back (Christ saith) his soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Even those that have endured the great fight of affliction, being reproached and made a gazing stock, and that having taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in assurance of a better and enduring substance, have yet need to be warned that they cast not away their confidence, and draw not back to perdition, and lose not the reward for want of patience and perseverance ; Heb. x. 22. to the end. That you may escape this danger and be happy for ever, take this advice. 1. Look carefully to the sincerity of your hearts, in the covenant-closure with Christ. See that you take him with the happiness he hath promised for your all. Take heed of looking after another felicity ; or cherishing other hopes ; or esteeming too highly any thing below. Be jealous, and very jealous, lest your hearts should close deceitfully with Christ, maintaining any secret reserve for your bodily safety ; either resolving not to follow him, or not resolving to follow him through the most desolate distressed condition that he shall lead you in. Count what it may cost you to get the crown ; study well his precepts of mortification and self-denial. There is no true hopes of the glory to come, if you cannot cast over-board all worldly hopes, when the storm is such that you must hazard the one. O how many have thought that Christ was most dear to them, and that the hopes of heaven were their chiefest hopes, who have left Christ, though with sorrow, when he bid them let go all ? 2. Every day renew your apprehensions of the truth and worth of the promised felicity, and of the delusory vanity of all things here below : let not heaven lose with you its attractive force, through your forgetfulness or unbelief. He is the best Christian that knows best why he is a Christian, and he will most faithfully seek and suffer, that best knows for what he doth it. Value not wealth and honour above that rate, which the wisest and best experienced have put

upon them, and allow them no more of your affections than they deserve. A mean wit may easily discover their emptiness. Look on all present actions and conditions with a remembrance of their end. Desire not a share in their prosperity, who must pay as dear for it as the loss of their souls. Be not ambitious of that honour which must end in confusion nor of the favour of those that God will call enemies. How speedily will they come down, and be levelled with the dust, and be laid in the chains of darkness, that now seem so happy to the purblind world, that cannot see the things to come? Fear not that man must shortly tremble before that God whom all must fear. 3. Be more solicitous for the securing of your consciences and salvation, than of your honours or estates: in every thing that you are put upon, consult first with God and conscience, and not with flesh and blood. It is your daily and most serious care and watchfulness that is requisite to maintain your integrity, and not a few careless thoughts or purposes, conjunct with a minding of earthly things. 4. Deal faithfully with every truth which you receive. Take heed of subjecting it to carnal interests: if once you have affections that can master your understandings, you are lost, and know it not. For when you have a resolution to cast off any duty, you will first believe it is no duty: and when you must change your judgment for carnal advantages, you will make the change seem reasonable and right: and evil shall be proved good when you have a mind to follow it. 5. Make Gospel-truths your own, by daily humble studies, arising to such a soundness of judgment, that you may not need to take too much upon trust, lest if your guides should miscarry, you miscarry with them. Deliver not up your understanding in captivity to any. 6. Yet do not over-value your own understandings. This pride hath done that in church and state, which all discerning men are lamenting. They that know but little, see not what they want, as well as what they have; nor that imperfection in their knowledge, which should humble them, nor that difficulty in things which should make them diligent and modest. 7. Apprehend the necessity and usefulness of Christ's officers, order, and ordinances, for the prosperity of his church: pastors must guide you, though not seduce you, or lead you blindfold. But choose (if you may) such as are judicious and not ignorant, not rash but sober, not

formal, but serious and spiritual ; not of carnal, but heavenly conversations : especially avoid them that divide and follow parties, and seek to draw disciples to themselves, and can sacrifice the church's unity and peace to their proud humours or carnal interests. Watch carefully that no weaknesses of the minister, do draw you to a disesteem of the ordinances of God ; nor any of the sad miscarriages of professors, should cause you to set less by truth or godliness. Wrong not Christ more, because other men have so wronged him. Quarrel more with your own unfitness and unworthiness in ordinances, than with other men's. It is the frame of your own heart that doth more to help or hinder your comforts, than the quality of those you join with. To these few directions, added to the rest in this book, I shall subjoin my hearty prayers, that you may receive from that Gospel, and ministry which you have owned, such stability in the faith, such victory over the flesh and the world, such apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, such direction in every strait and duty, that you may live uprightly, and die peaceably, and reign gloriously. Amen.

Your servant in the faith

and Gospel of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

May 9, 1653.

VII
TO THE

POOR IN SPIRIT.

My dearly beloved fellow Christians, whose souls are taken up with the careful thoughts of attaining and maintaining peace with God, who are vile in your own eyes, and value the blood and Spirit, and word of your Redeemer, and the hope of the saints in their approaching blessedness, before all the pomp and vanities of this world; and resolve to give up yourselves to his conduct, who is become "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him:" for you do I publish the following directions, and to you it is that I direct this preface. The only glorious and infinite God, who made the worlds, and upholdeth them by his word, who is attended with millions of his glorious angels, and praised continually by his heavenly hosts; who pulleth down the mighty from their seats, and scattereth the proud in the imaginations of their hearts, and maketh his enemies lick the dust; to whom the kings and conquerors of the earth are as the most silly worms, and the whole world is nothing, and lighter than vanity, which he will shortly turn into flames before your eyes. This God hath sent me to you, with that joyful message, which needs no more but your believing entertainment, to make it sufficient to raise you from the dust, and banish those terrors and troubles from your hearts, and help you to live like the sons of God. He commandeth me to tell you, that he takes notice of your sorrows. He stands by when you see him not, and say, he hath forsaken you. He minds you with greatest tender-

ness, when you say, he hath forgotten you. He numbereth your sighs. He bottles up your tears. The groans of your heart do reach his own. He takes it unkindly, that you are so suspicious of him, and that all that he hath done for you in the work of redemption, and all the gracious workings of his Spirit on your souls, and all your own peculiar experiences of his goodness, can raise you to no higher apprehensions of his love! Shall not love be acknowledged to be love, when it is grown to a miracle? When it surpasseth comprehension! Must the Lord set up love and mercy in the work of redemption, to be equally admired with his omnipotency manifested in the creation? And call forth the world to this sweet employment, that in secret and in public it might be the business of our lives? And yet shall it be so overlooked or questioned, as if you lived without love and mercy in the world? Providence doth its part, by heaping up mountains of daily mercies, and these it sets before your eyes. The Gospel hath eminently done its part by clear describing them, and fully assuring them, and this is proclaimed frequently in your ears. And yet is there so little in your hearts and mouths? Do you see, and hear, and feel, and taste mercy and love? Do you live wholly on it? And yet do you still doubt of it? and think so meanly of it, and so hardly acknowledge it? God takes not this well; but yet he considereth your frailty, and takes you not at the worst. He knows that flesh will play its part, and the remnants of corruption will not be idle. And the serpent will be suggesting false thoughts of God, and will be still striving most to obscure that part of his glory which is dearest to him, and especially which is most conjoined with the happiness of man. He knows also, that sin will breed sorrows and fears; and that man's understanding is shallow, and all his conceivings of God are exceeding low. And that we are so far from God as creatures, and so much further as sinners, and especially as conscious of the abuse of his grace, that there must needs follow such a strangeness as will damp and dull our apprehensions of his love. And such an abatement of our confidence, as will make us draw back, and look at God afar off. Seeing therefore that at this distance no full apprehensions of love can be expected, it is the pleasure of our Redeemer shortly to return,

with ten thousands of his saints, with the noble army of his martyrs, and the attendance of his angels, and to give you such a convincing demonstration of his love, as shall leave no room for one more doubt. Your comforts are now but a taste, they shall be then a feast. They are now but intermittent, they shall be then continual. How soon now do your conquered fears return; and what an inconstancy and unevenness is there in our peace. But then our peace must needs be perfect and permanent, when we shall please God, and enjoy him in perfection to perpetuity. Certainly, Christians, your comforts should be now more abundant, but that they are not ripe. It is that, and not this, that is your harvest. I have told you in another book, the mistake and danger of expecting too much here, and the necessity of looking and longing for that rest, if we will have peace indeed! But, alas, how hard is this lesson learned! Unbelievers would have happiness, but how fain would they have it in the creature rather than in God! Believers would rather have their happiness in God than in the creature, but how fain would they have it without dying! And no wonder, for when sin brought in death, even grace itself cannot love it, though it may submit to it. But though churlish death do stand in our way, why look we not at the soul's admittance into rest, and the body's resurrection that must shortly follow? Doubtless that faith by which we are justified and saved, as it sits down on the word of truth as the present ground of its confident repose, so doth it thence look with one eye backward on the cross, and with the other forward on the crown. And if we well observe the Scripture descriptions of that faith, we shall find them as frequently magnifying it, and describing it from the latter, as from the former. As it is the duty and glory of faith to look back with thankful acknowledgment to a crucified Christ, and his payment of our ransom, so is it the duty and glory of that same justifying faith to look forward with desire and hope to the return of king Jesus, and the glorious celebration of the marriage of the Lamb, and the sentential justification, and the glorification of his saints. To believe these things unfeignedly which we never saw, nor ever spoke with man that did see, and to hope for them so really as to let go all present forbidden pleasures, and all worldly hopes

and seeming happiness, rather than to hazard the loss of them. This is an eminent part of that faith by which the just do live, and which the Scripture doth own as justifying and saving. For it never distinguishes between justifying faith, as to their nature. It is therefore a great mistake of some to look only at that one eye of justifying faith which looks back upon the cross, and a great mistake of them on the other hand that look only at that eye of it which beholds the crown. Both Christ crucified, and Christ interceding, and Christ returning to justify and glorify, are the objects even of justifying, saving faith, most strictly so called. The Scripture oft expresseth the one only, but then it still implieth the other. The Socinians erroneously therefore from Heb. xi. where the examples and eulogies of faith are set forth, do exclude Christ crucified, or the respect to his satisfaction, from justifying faith, and place it in a mere expectation of glory. And others do as ungroundedly affirm, that is not the justifying act of faith which Heb. xi. describeth, because they find not the cross of Christ there mentioned. For as believing in Christ's blood comprehendeth the end, even the expectation of remission and glory merited by that blood, so the believing of that glory doth always imply that we believe and expect it as the fruit of Christ's ransom. It is for health and life that we accept and trust upon our physician. And it is for justification and salvation that we accept and trust on Christ. The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith. They that question whether we may believe and obey for our own salvation, do question whether we may go to the physician and follow his advice for health and life. Why then do you that are believers so much forget the end of your faith? And that for which it is that you believe? Believing in Christ for present mercies only, be they temporal or spiritual, is not the true believing. They are dangerously mistaken that think the thoughts of heaven to be so accidental to the nature and work of faith, is that they tend only to our comfort, and are not necessary to salvation itself. It is upon your apprehensions and expectations of that unseen felicity that both your peace and safety do depend. How contrary therefore is it to the nature of a believer, to forget the place of his rest and consolation! And to look for so much of these from the creatures, in this our present pilgrimage and prison, as, alas, too

commonly we do! Thus do we kill our comforts, and then complain for want of them. How should you have any life or constancy of consolations, that are so seldom, so slight, so unbelieving, and so heartless in your thoughts of heaven! You know what a folly it is to expect any peace, which shall not come from Christ as the fountain. And you must learn as well to understand what a folly it is to expect any solid joys, or stable peace, which is not fetched from heaven, as from the end. O that Christians were careful to live with one eye still on Christ crucified, and with the other on Christ coming in glory! If the everlasting joys were more in your believing thoughts, spiritual joys would more abound at present in your hearts. It is no more wonder that you are comfortless when heaven is forgotten, or doubtingly remembered, than that you are faint when you eat not, or cold when you stir not, or when you have not fire or clothes.

But when Christians do not only let fall their expectations of the things unseen, but also heighten their expectations from the creature, then do they most infallibly prepare for their fears and troubles, and estrangedness from God, and with both hands draw calamities on their souls. Whoever meets with a distressed, complaining soul, where one or both of these is not apparent? Their low expectations from God hereafter, or their high expectations from the creature now? What doth keep us under such trouble and disquietness, but that we will not expect what God hath promised, or we will needs expect what he promised not? And then we complain when we miss of those expectations which we foolishly and ungroundedly raised to ourselves. We are grieved for crosses, for losses, for wrongs from our enemies, for unkind or unfaithful dealings of our friends, for sickness, for contempt and disesteem in the world! But who bid you look for any better? Was it prosperity and riches, and credit, and friends, that God called you to believe for? or that you became Christians for? or that you had an absolute promise of in the word? If you will make promises to yourself, and then your own promises deceive you, whom should you blame for that? Nay, do we not, as it were necessitate God hereby to embitter all our comforts below, and to make every creature as a scorpion to us, because we will needs make them our petty deities? We have less comfort

in them than else we might have, because we must needs have more than we should have. You might have more faithfulness from your friends, more reputation in the world, more sweetness in all your present enjoyments, if you looked for less. Why is it that you can scarce name a creature near you, that is not a scourge to you, but because you can scarce name one that is not your idol, or at least which you do not expect more from than you ought? Nay, (which is one of the saddest considerations of this kind that can be imagined) God is fain to scourge us most even by the highest professors of religion, because we have most idolized them, and had such excessive expectations from them. One would have thought it next to an impossibility, that such men, and so many of them, could ever have been drawn to do that against the church, against that Gospel-ministry and ordinances of God (which once seemed dearer to them than their lives) which hath since been done, and which yet we fear! But a believing eye can discern the reason of this sad providence in part. Never men were more idolized, and therefore no wonder if were never so afflicted by any. Alas, when will we learn by Scripture and providence so to know God and the creature, as to look for far more from him, and less from them! We have looked for wonders from Scotland, and what is come of it? We looked that war should have even satisfied our desires, and when it had removed all visible impediments, we thought we should have had such a glorious reformation as the world never knew! And now behold a babel, and a mangled deformation! What high expectations had we from an assembly! What expectations from a parliament, and where are they now! O hear the word of the Lord, ye low-spirited people! "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of;" Isa. ii. 22. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the hearth in the desart, and shall not see when good cometh. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters," &c.; Jer. xvii. 5—8. "Surely men of low degree are vanity; and men of high degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity;" Psal. lxii. 9. Let me

warn you all, Christians, for the time to come, take the creature as a creature; remember its frailty; look for no more from it than its part. If you have the nearest, dearest, godly friends, expect to feel the sting of their corruptions, as well as to taste the sweetness of their grace. And they must expect the like from you.

If you ask me why I speak so much of these things here? It is, 1. Because I find that much of the trouble of ordinary Christians comes from their crosses in the creature, and the frustration of these their sinful expectations. 2. And because I have said so little of it in the following directions, they being intended for the cure of another kind of trouble, therefore I have said thus much here of this.

Having premised this advice, I take myself bound to add one thing more; that is, an apology for the publication of this imperfect piece, whether just or insufficient other men must judge. I confess I am so apprehensive of the luxuriant fertility, or licentiousness of the press of late, as being a design of the enemy to bury and overwhelm in a crowd those judicious, pious, excellent writings, that before were so commonly read by the people, that I think few men should now print without an apology, much less such as I. Who hath more lamented this inundation of impertinencies? or more accused the ignorance and pride of others, that must needs disgorge themselves of all their crudities, as if they were such precious conceptions proceeding from the Holy Ghost, that the world might not, without very great injury, be deprived of; and it were pity that all men should not be made partakers of them? And how come I to go on in the same fault myself? Truly I have no excuse or argument, but those of the times, necessity, and providence; which how far they may justify me, I must leave to the judge. Being in company with a troubled, complaining friend, I perceived that it must be some standing counsel which might be frequently perused, that must satisfactorily answer the complaints that I heard, and not a transient speech, which would quickly slip away. Being therefore obliged as a pastor, and as a friend, and as a Christian, to tender my best assistance for relief, I was suddenly, in the moment of speaking, moved to promise one sheet of paper, which might be useful to that end. Which promise, when I attempted

to perform, the one sheet lengthened to thirty, and my one day's (intended) work was drawn out to a just month. I went on far before I had the least thought to let any eye behold it, except the party for whom I wrote it. But at last I perceived an impossibility of contracting, and I was presently possessed with confident apprehensions, that a copy of those directions might be useful to many other of my poor neighbours and friends that needed them as much. Upon which apprehension I permitted my pen to run more at large, and to deviate from the case of the party that I wrote for, and to take in the common case of most troubled, doubting souls. By that time that I had finished it, I received letters from several parts, from learned and judicious divines, importuning me to print more, having understood my intentions to desist, as having done too much already, even at first. I confess I was not much moved by their importunity, till they seconded it with their arguments; whereof one was, the experience of the success of former writings, which might assure me it was not displeasing to God. I had many that urged me, I had no one but myself to draw me back. I apprehended that a writing of this nature might be useful to the many weak, perplexed Christians through the land. Two reasons did at first come in against it. The first was, that if there were no more written on this subject than Dr. Sibbs' "Bruised Reed, and Soul's Conflict," and Mr. Jos. Symonds' "Deserted Soul's Case and Cure," there need no more. Especially there being also Dr. Preston's Works, and many of Perkins', to this use; and Mr. Ball, and Mr. Culverwell of Faith, and divers the like. To this my own judgment answered, that yet these brief directions might add somewhat that might be useful to the weak, as to the method of their proceedings, if not to the matter. And my brethren stopped my mouth by telling me, that others had written before me of heaven and baptism, and yet my labours were not lost. Next this, I thought the crudity and weakness of the writing was such, as should prohibit the publication, it being unfit to thrust upon the world the hasty, undigested lines, that were written for the use of one person. To this my thoughts replied, that, 1. For all that it might be useful to poor women, and country people, who most commonly prove the troubled spirits, for whose sakes I wrote it. Had

I writ for the use of learned men, I would have tried to make it fitter for their use ; and if I could not, I would have suppressed it. 2. It was my pride that nourished this scruple, which moved me not to appear so homely to the world, and therefore I cast it by. One thing more I confess did much prevail with me to make these papers public, and that is, the Antinomians common confident obtrusion of their anti-evangelical doctrines and methods for comforting troubled souls. They are the most notorious mountebanks in this art, the highest pretenders, and most unhappy performers, that most of the reformed churches ever knew. And none usually are more ready to receive their doctrines, than such weak women, or unskilful people, that being in trouble, are like a sick man in great pain, who is glad to hear what all can say, and to make trial of every thing by which he hath any hope of ease. And then there is so much opium in these mountebanks *Nepenthes*, or *Antidote of rest*: so many principles of carnal security and presumption, which tend to the present ease of the patient, whatever follow, that it is no wonder if some well-meaning Christians do quickly swallow the bait, and proclaim the rare effects of this medicament, and the admirable skill of this unskilful sect, to the ensnaring of others, especially that are in the like distress. Especially when they meet with some divines of our own, who do deliver to them some master-points of this system of mistakes, which are so necessarily concatenated to the rest, that they may easily see, if they have one, they must have all, unless they will hold contradictions. As to instance in the doctrine of justification before faith, or the dissolving the obligation to punishment, which is nothing but the remission of sin before faith. So that nothing remains since Christ's death (as some) or since God's decree (as others) but only to have your pardon manifested, or to be justified in conscience, or (as some phrase it) to have that justification which is terminated in conscience. There is a very judicious man, Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, of Newbury, hath written so excellent well against this error, and in so small room, being but one sermon, that I would advise all private Christians to get one of them, and peruse it, as one of the best, easiest, cheapest preservatives against the contagion of this part of Antinomianism.

I had not troubled the reader with this apology, had I thought so well of this writing, as to be a sufficient apology for itself; or had I not taken it for a heinous crime to speak idly in print.

For the doctrine here contained, it is of a middle strain, between (I think) the extremes of some others. I have laboured so to build up peace, as not thereby to fortify presumption. And perhaps in some points you may see my meaning more plainly, which through the obscurity of former writings, I was misunderstood in. As for the manner of this writing, I must desire them that expect learning or exactness, to turn away their eyes, and know, that I wrote it not for such as they. I use not to speak any thing but plain English to that sex, or to that use and end for which I wrote these lines. I wrote to the utmost verge of my paper, before I thought to make it public, and so had no room for marginal quotations, (nor time to transcribe that copy, that I might have room,) nor indeed much mind of them, if I had both room and time.

As in all the removes of my life I have been still led to that place or state which was farthest from my own thoughts, and never designed or contrived by myself; so all the writings that yet I have published, are such as have been by some sudden, unexpected occasion extorted from me, while those that I most affected have been stifled in the conception; and those I have most laboured in, must lie buried in the dust, that I may know it is God that is the disposer of all. Experience persuadeth me to think, that God, who hath compelled me hitherto, intendeth to make this hasty writing a means for the calming of some troubled souls; which if he do, I have my end. If I can do nothing to the church's public peace, either through my own unskilfulness and unworthiness, or through the prevalency of the malady; yet will it be my comfort, to further the peace of the poorest Christian. (Though to the former also I shall contribute my best endeavours, and am with this sending to the press some few sheets to that end, with our "Worcestershire Agreement.") The full accomplishment of both; the subduing of the prince of darkness, confusion, and contention; the destroying of that pride, self-esteem, self-seeking, and carnal-mindedness, which remaining even in the best,

are the disturbers of all peace; the fuller discovery of the sinfulness of unpeaceable principles, dispositions, and practices; the nearer closure of all true believers, and the hastening of the church's everlasting peace;—these are his daily prayers, who is

A zealous desirer of the peace of the
church, and of every faithful soul,

RICHARD BAXTER.

May 7, 1653.

THE
RIGHT METHOD

FOR
A SETTLED PEACE OF CONSCIENCE

AND
SPIRITUAL COMFORT.

IT must be understood, that the case here to be resolved is not, How an unhumbl'd, profane sinner, that never was convinc'd of sin and misery, should be brought to a settled peace of conscience. Their carnal peace must first be broken, and they must be so far humbled, as to find the want and worth of mercy, that Christ and his consolations may not seem contemptible in their eyes. It is none of my business now, to give any advice for the furthering of this conviction or humiliation. But the case in hand is, 'How a sinner may attain to a settled peace of conscience, and some competent measure of the joy of the Holy Ghost, who hath been convinc'd of sin and misery, and long made a profession of holiness, but liveth in continual doubtings of their sincerity, and fears of God's wrath, because of an exceeding deadness of spirit, and a want of that love to God, and delight in him, and sweetness in duty, and witness of the Spirit, and communion with God, and the other like evidences which are found in the saints.' How far the party is right or wrong in the discovery of these wants, I now meddle not. Whether they judge rightly or wrongly, the Directions may be useful to them. And though I purposely meddle not with the unhumbl'd, that feel not the want of Christ and

20 DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING AND KEEPING

mercy, yet most that falls may be useful to all that profess the Christian faith. For I shall study so to avoid the extremes in my doctrinal directions, as may conduce to your escaping the desperate extremes of ungrounded comforts, and causeless terrors in your own spirit.

Of my directions, the first shall be only general, and the rest more particular. And in all of them I must entreat you, 1. To observe the order and method, as well as the matter ; and that you would practise them in the same order as I place them. 2. And to remember that it is not only comfortable words, but it is direction for your own practice, which here I prescribe you ; and therefore that it is not the bare reading of them that will cure you ; but if you mean to have the benefit of them, you must bestow more time in practising them, than I have done in penning them ; yea, you must make it the work of your life. And let not that startle you, or seem tedious to you, for it will be no more grievous a work to a well-tempered soul, than eating or drinking, or sleep, or recreation is to an healthful body ; and than it is to an honest woman to love and delight in her husband and her children, which is no grievous task.

Direction I. ‘ Get as clear a discovery as you can of the true cause of your doubts and troubles ; for if you should mistake in the cause, it would much frustrate the most excellent means for the cure.’

The very same doubts and complaints, may come from several causes in several persons, and therefore admit not of the same way of cure. Sometimes the cause begins in the body, and thence proceedeth to the mind ; sometimes it begins in the mind, and thence distempereth the body. Sometimes in the mind, it is most, or first from worldly crosses, and thence proceedeth to spiritual things. And of spiritual matters, sometimes it begins upon scruples or differences in religion, or points of doctrine ; sometimes and most commonly, from the sense of our own infirmities ; sometimes it is only from ordinary infirmities ; sometimes from some extraordinary decays of inward grace ; sometime from the neglect of some weighty duty ; and sometimes from the deep wounds of some heinous, secret, or scandalous sin ; and sometimes it is merely from the fresh discovery of that which before we never did discern ; and sometimes from the violent assault of extraordinary temptations. Which of

these is your own case, you must be careful to find out, and to apply the means for cure accordingly. Even of true Christians, the same means will not fit all. The difference of natures, as well as of actual cases, must be considered. One hath need of that tender handling, which would undo another; and he again hath need of that rousing which another cannot bear. And therefore understand, that when I have given you all the directions that I can, I must, in the end hereof, advise you to take the counsel of a skilful minister, in applying and making use of them: for it is in this, as in the case of physic, when we have written the best books of receipts, or for methodical cures; yet we must advise people to take heed how they use them, without the advice of a learned and faithful physician; for medicines must not be only fitted to diseases, but to bodies: that medicine will kill one man, which will cure another of the same distemper; such difference there may be in their age, strength, complexion, and other things. So is it much in our present case. And therefore as when all the physic books in the world are written, and all receipts known, yet will there be still a necessity of physicians: so when all discoveries and directions are made in divinity, there will still be a necessity of a constant standing ministry. And as ignorant women and empirics do kill oftentimes more than they cure, though they have the best receipts, for want of judgment and experience to use them aright; so do ignorant teachers and guides by men's souls, though they can say the same words as a judicious pastor, and repeat the same texts of Scripture. Not that I mean, that such can do no good: yes, much no doubt, if they will humbly, compassionately, and faithfully improve their talents within the verge of their own calling; which if they go beyond, ordinarily a remarkable judgment followeth their best labours; both to the churches, and particular souls that make use of them. And therefore because (if my conjectural prognostics fail not, as I daily pray they may) we are like to be more tried and plagued in this way, than ever were any of our forefathers, since Adam's days, till now: and seeing this is the hour of our temptation, wherein God is purposely separating the chaff, and discovering to the world the dangers of injudicious, misguided zeal; I shall therefore both first and last advise you, as ever you would have a settled

peace of conscience, keep out of the hand of vagrant and seducing mountebanks, under what names, or titles, or pretences soever they may assault you. Especially suspect all that bestow as much pains to win you to their party, as to win you to Christ.

Direct. II. 'Make as full a discovery as you can, how much of the trouble of your mind doth arise from your melancholy and bodily distempers, and how much from discontenting afflictions in your worldly estate, or friends, or name, and according to your discovery make use of the remedy.'

I put these two causes of trouble here together in the beginning, because I will presently dismiss them; and apply the rest of these directions only to those troubles that are raised from sins and wants in grace.

1. For melancholy, I have by long experience found it to have so great and common a hand in the fears and troubles of mind, that I meet not with one of many, that live in great troubles and fears for any long time together; but melancholy is the main seat of them; though they feel nothing in their body, but all in their mind. I would have such persons make use of some able godly physician, and he will help them to discern how much of their trouble comes from melancholy. Where this is the cause, usually the party is fearful of almost every thing; a word, or a sudden thought will disquiet them. Sometimes they are sad, and scarce know why: all comforts are of no continuance with them; but as soon as you have done comforting them, and they be never so well satisfied, yet the trouble returns in a few days or hours, as soon as the dark and troubled spirits return to their former force: they are still addicted to musing and solitariness, and thoughts will run in their minds, that they cannot lay them by: if it go any thing far, they are almost always assaulted with temptations to blasphemy, to doubt whether there be a God, or a Christ, or the Scriptures be true; or whether there be a heaven or a hell; and oft tempted to speak some blasphemous words against God; and this with such importunity, that they can hardly forbear; and oftentimes they are tempted to make away themselves. When it goes so far, they are next the loss of the use of reason, if it be not prevented.

Now to those that find that melancholy is the cause of

their troubles, I would give this advice. 1. Expect not that rational, spiritual remedies, should suffice for this cure : for you may as well expect that a good sermon, or comfortable words, should cure the falling sickness, or palsy, or a broken head, as to be a sufficient cure to your melancholy fears ; for this is as real a bodily disease as the other ; only because it works on the spirits and fantasy, on which words of advice do also work, therefore such words, and Scripture and reason, may somewhat resist it, and may palliate or allay some of the effects at the present ; but as soon as time hath worn off the force and effects of these reasons, the distemper presently returns.

For the humour hath the advantage ; 1. Of continual presence. 2. Of a more necessary, natural, and sensible way of working. As if a man be in an easy lethargy, you may awake him so long as you are calling on him aloud ; but as soon as you cease, he is asleep again. Such is the case of the melancholy in their sorrows ; for it is as natural for melancholy to cause fears and disquietness of mind, as for phlegm in a lethargy to cause sleep.

Do not therefore lay the blame on your books, friends, counsels, instructions (no nor all on your soul) if these troubles be not cured by words : but labour to discern truly how much of your trouble comes this way, and then fix in your mind in all your inquiries, reading, and hearing, that it is the other part of your trouble which is truly rational, and not this part of it which is from melancholy, that these means were ordained to remove (though God may also bless them extraordinarily to do both). Only constant importunate prayer is a fit and special means for the curing of all.

2. When you have truly found out how much of your disquietness proceeds from melancholy, acquit your soul from that part of it ; still remember in all your self-examinations, self-judgings, and reflections on your heart, that it is not directly to be charged with those sorrows that come from your spleen ; save only remotely, as all other diseases are the fruits of sin ; as a lethargic dulness is the deserved fruit of sin ; but he that should charge it immediately on his soul, should wrong himself, and he that would attempt the cure, must do it on the body.

3. If you would have these fears and troubles removed, apply yourself to the proper cure of melancholy. 1. Avoid

all passion of sorrow, fear, and anger, as much as you can ; and all occasions, and discontents and grief. 2. Avoid much solitariness, and be most commonly in some cheerful company. Not that I would have you do as the foolish sinners of the world do, to drink away melancholy, and keep company with sensual, vain, and unprofitable persons, that will draw you deeper into sin, and so make your wound greater instead of healing it, and multiply your troubles when you are forced to look back on your sinful loss of time. But keep company with the more cheerful sort of the godly. There is no mirth like the mirth of believers, which faith doth fetch from the blood of Christ, and from the promises of the word, and from experiences of mercy, and from the serious fore-apprehensions of our everlasting blessedness. Converse with men of strongest faith, that have this heavenly mirth, and can speak experimentally of the joy of the Holy Ghost ; and these will be a great help to the reviving of your spirit, and changing your melancholy habit, so far as without a physician it may be expected. Yet sometimes it may not be amiss to confer with some that are in your own case, that you may see that your condition is not singular. For melancholy people, in such distresses, are ready to think, that never any was in the case as they are in ; or at least, never any that were truly godly. When you hear people of the most upright lives, and that truly fear God, to have the same complaints as you have yourself, it may give you some hopes that it is not so bad as you before did imagine. However be sure that you avoid solitariness as much as you well can. 3. Also take heed of too deep, fixed, musing thoughts ; studying and serious meditating be not duties for the deeply melancholy (as I shall shew more in the following directions) ; you must let those alone till you are better able to perform them, lest by attempting those duties which you cannot perform, you shall utterly disable yourself from all : therefore I would advise you, by all means, to shake and rouse yourself out of such musings, and suddenly to turn your thoughts away to something else. 4. To this end, be sure that you avoid idleness and want of employment ; which as it is a life not pleasing to God, so is it the opportunity for melancholy thoughts to be working, and the chiefest season for satan to tempt you. Never let the devil find you unemployed, but see that you

go cheerfully about the works of your calling, and follow it with diligence; and that time which you redeem for spiritual exercises, let it be most spent in thanksgiving, and praises, and heavenly conference.

These things may do much for prevention, and abating your disease, if it be not gone too far; but if it be, you were best have recourse to the physician, and expect God's blessing in the use of means; and you will find, when your body is once cured, the disquietness of your mind will vanish of itself.

2. The second part of this direction, was, that you take notice how much of your disquietness may proceed from outward crosses; for it is ordinary for these to lie at the root, and bring the heart into a disquiet and discontent, and then trouble for sin doth follow after. Alas, how oft have I seen that verified of the apostle; 2 Cor. vii. 10. "The sorrow of the world worketh death." How many, even godly people have I known, that through crosses in children, or friends, or losses in their estates, or wrongs from men, or perplexities, that through some unadvisedness they were cast into, or the like, have fallen into mortal diseases, or into such a fixed melancholy, that some of them have gone besides themselves; and others have lived in fears and doubting ever after, by the removal of the disquietness to their consciences? How sad a thing is it, that we should thus add to our own afflictions? And the heavier we judge the burden, the more we lay on! As if God had not done enough, or would not sufficiently afflict us. We may more comfortably bear that which God layeth on us, than that which we immediately lay upon ourselves! Crosses are not great or small, according to the bulk of the matter, but according chiefly to the mind of the sufferer. Or else, how could holy men "rejoice in tribulation, and be exceeding glad that they are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ?" Reproaches, wrongs, losses, are all without you; unless you open them the door wilfully yourself, they cannot come into the heart. God hath not put the joy or grief, of your heart in any other man's power, but in your own. It is you therefore that do yourselves the greatest mischief. God afflicts your body, or men wrong you in your state or name (a small hurt if it go no further) and therefore you will afflict your soul! But a sadder thing yet is it to consider of, that men fearing God

should so highly value the things of the world. They who in their covenants with Christ, are engaged to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil: they that have taken God in Christ for their portion, for their all; and have resigned themselves and all that they have to Christ's dispose! Whose very business in this world, and their Christian life, consisteth so much in resisting the devil, mortifying the flesh, and overcoming the world; and it is God's business in his inward works of grace, and his outward teachings, and sharp afflictions, and examples of others, to convince them of the vanity and vexation of the world, and thoroughly to wean them from it; and yet that it should be so high in their estimation, and sit so close to their hearts, that they cannot bear the loss of it without such discontent, disquiet, and distraction of mind; yea, though when all is gone, they have their God left them, they have their Christ still, whom they took for their treasure; they have opportunities for their souls, they have the sure promise of glory, yea, and a promise, that "all things shall work together for their good;" yea, and for that one thing that is taken from them, they have yet an hundred outward mercies remaining, that yet even believers should have so much unbelief! and have their faith to seek, when they should use it, and live by it! And that God should seem so small in their eye, as not to satisfy or quiet them, unless they have the world with him; and that the world should still seem so amiable, when God hath done so much to bring it into contempt! Truly this (and more) shews that the work of mortification is very imperfect in professors, and that we bend not the force of our daily strivings and endeavours that way. If Christians did bestow but as much time and pains in mortifying the flesh, and getting down the interest of it in the soul, that Christ's interest may be advanced, as they do about controversies, external duties, formalities, tasks of devotion, and self-tormenting fears, O what excellent Christians should we then be! And how happily would most of our disquiet be removed! Alas, if we are so unfit to part with one outward comfort now, upon the disposal of our Father's providence, how should we forsake all for Christ? O what shall we do at death, when all must be parted with! As ever therefore you would live in true Christian peace, set more by Christ, and less by the world, and all things in it; and hold all that

you possess so loosely, that it may not be grievous to you when you must leave them.

So much for the troubles that arise from your body and outward state. All the rest shall be directed for the curing of those troubles that arise immediately from more spiritual causes.

Direct. III. 'Be sure that you first lay sound apprehensions of God's nature in your understanding, and lay them deeply.'

This is the first article of your creed, and the first part of "life eternal, to know God!" His substance is quite past human understanding; therefore never make any attempt to reach the knowledge of it, or to have any positive conceivings of it, for they will be all but idols, or false conceptions; but his attributes are manifested to our understandings. Well, consider, that even under the terrible law, when God proclaims to Moses his own name, and therein his nature, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. the first and greatest part is, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. And he hath sworn, "That he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he return and live." Think not therefore of God's mercifulness, with diminishing, extenuating thoughts, nor limit it by the bounds of our frail understandings; For the heavens are not so far above the earth, as his thoughts and ways are above ours. Still remember that you must have no low thoughts of God's goodness, but apprehend it as bearing proportion with his power. As it is blasphemy to limit his power, so it is to limit his goodness. The advantages that your soul will get by this right knowledge, and estimation of God's goodness, will be these.

1. This will make God appear more amiable in your eyes, and then you will love him more readily and abundantly. And love, 1. Is effectually consolatory in the very working; so much love, usually so much comfort, (I mean this love of complacency; for a love of desire there may be without comfort). 2. It will breed persuasions of God's love to you again, and so comfort. 3. It will be an unquestionable evidence of true grace, and so comfort.

The affections follow the understanding's conceptions. If you think of God as one that is glad of all advantages

against you, and delighteth in his creatures misery, it is impossible you should love him. The love of yourselves is so deeply rooted in nature, that we cannot lay it by, nor love any thing that is absolutely and directly against us. We conceive of the devil as an absolute enemy to God and man, and one that seeks our destruction, and therefore we cannot love him. And the great cause why troubled souls do love God no more, is because they represent him to themselves in an ugly, odious shape. To think of God as one that seeks and delighteth in man's ruin, is to make him as the devil. And then what wonder if instead of loving him, and delighting in him, you tremble at the thoughts of him, and fly from him. As I have observed children, when they have seen the devil painted on the wall, in an ugly shape, they have partly feared, and partly hated it. If you do so by God in your fancy, it is not putting the name of God on him when you have done, that will reconcile your affections to him as long as you strip him of his divine nature. Remember the Holy Ghost's description of God, 1 John iv. 16. "God is love." Write these words deep in your understanding.

2. Hereby you will have this advantage also, that your thoughts of God will be more sweet and delightful to you. For as glorious and beautiful sights to your eyes, and melodious sounds to your ears, and sweet smells, tastes, &c. are all delightful: when things deformed, stinking, &c. are all loathsome, and we turn away from one with abhorrency, but for the other, we would often see, taste, &c. and enjoy them. So is it with the objects of our mind; God hath given no command for duty, but what most perfectly agreeth with the nature of the object. He hath therefore bid us love God and delight in him above all, because he is above all in goodness; even infinitely and inconceivably good; else we could not love him above all, nor would he ever command us so to do. The object is ever as exactly fitted to its part, as to draw out the love and delight of our hearts, as the precept is on its part, to oblige us to it. And indeed the nature of things is a precept to duty, and it which we call the law of nature.

3. Hereupon will follow this further advantage, that your thoughts will be both more easily drawn toward God, and more frequent and constant on him; for delightful objects draw the heart to them, as the loadstone doth the iron.

How gladly, and freely, and frequently do you think of your dearest friends. And if you did firmly conceive of God, as one that is ten thousand times more gracious, loving, and amiable than any friend that you have in the world, it would make you not only to love him above all friends, but also more freely, delightfully, and unweariedly to think of him.

4. And then you would hence have this further advantage, that you would have less backwardness to any duty, and less weariness in duty; you would find more delight in prayer, meditation, and speech of God, when once God himself were more lovely and delightful in your eyes.

5. All these advantages would produce a further, that is, the growth of all your graces. For it is impossible, but this growth of love, and frequent delightful thoughts of God, and addresses to him, should cause an increase of all the rest.

6. Hereupon your evidences would be more clear and discernible. For grace in strength and action would be easily found; and would not this resolve all your doubts at once?

7. Yea, the very exercise of these several graces would be comfortable.

8. And hereupon you would have more humble familiarity and communion with God; for love, delight, and frequent addresses, would overcome strangeness and disacquaintance, which make us fly from God, as a fish, or bird, or wild beast, will from the face of a man, and would give us access with boldness and confidence. And this would banish sadness and terror, as the sun dispelleth darkness and cold.

9. At least you would hence have this advantage, that the fixed apprehension of God's goodness and merciful nature, would cause a fixed apprehension of the probability of your happiness, as long as you are willing to be happy in God's way. For reason will tell you, that he who is love itself, and whose goodness is equal to his almightiness, and who hath sworn, that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live, will not destroy a poor soul that lieth in submission at his feet, and is so far from resolved rebellion against him, that he grieveth that it is no better, and can please him no more.

10. However, these right apprehensions of God would overcome those terrors which are raised only by false apprehensions of him. And doubtless a very great part of men's causeless troubles, are raised from such misapprehensions of God. For satan knows, that if he can bring you to think of God as a cruel tyrant and blood-thirsty man-hater, then he can drive you from him in terror, and turn all your love and cheerful obedience into hatred and slavish fear. I say therefore again, do not only get, but also fix deep in your understanding, the highest thoughts of God's natural goodness and graciousness that possibly you can raise. For when they are at the highest, they come short ten thousand-fold.

Object. ' But God's goodness lieth not in mercy to men, as I have read in great divines ; he may be perfectly good, though he should for ever torment the most innocent creatures.'

Ans. These are ignorant, presumptuous intrusions into that which is unsearchable. Where doth Scripture say as you say ? Judge of God as he revealeth himself, or you will but delude yourself, and abuse him. All his works represent him merciful ; for " his mercy is over all his works," and legible in them all. His word saith, " He is good, and doth good ;" Psal. cxix. 68. cxlv. 9. How himself doth proclaim his own name (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) I told you before. The most merciful men are his liveliest image ; and therefore he plants mercy in them in their conversion, as a principal part of their new nature. And commands of mercifulness are a great part of his law ; and he bids us " Be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful ;" Luke vi. 36. Now if this were none of his nature, how could he be the pattern of our new nature herein ? And if he were not infinitely merciful himself, how could we be required to be merciful, as he is ? Who dare say, ' I am more merciful than God ?'

Object. ' But God is just as well as merciful ; and for all his merciful nature, he will damn most of the world for ever in hell.'

Ans. 1. But James saith, " Mercy rejoiceth against judgment ;" James ii. 13. 2. God is necessarily the Governor of the world (while there is a world), and therefore must govern it in justice, and so must not suffer his mercy

to be perpetually abused by wicked, wilful, contemptuous sinners. But then consider two things : 1. That he destroyeth not humble souls that lie at his feet, and are willing to have mercy on his easy terms, but only the stubborn despisers of his mercy. He damneth none but those that will not be saved in his way ; that is, that will not accept of Christ and salvation freely given them. (I speak of those that hear the Gospel ; for others, their case is more unknown to us.) And is it any diminution to his infinite mercy, that he will not save those that will not be entreated to accept of salvation ? 2. And consider how long he useth to wait on sinners, and even beseech them to be reconciled to him, before he destroyeth them ; and that he heapeth multitudes of mercies on them, even in their rebellion, to draw them to repentance, and so to life. And is it unmercifulness yet if such men perish ?

Object. ' But if God were so infinite in mercy, as you say, why doth he not make all these men willing, that so they may be saved ?'

Answ. God having created the world, and all things it, at first, did make them in a certain nature and order, and so establish them as by a fixed law ; and he thereupon is their Governor, to govern every thing according to his nature. Now man's nature was to be principled with an inclination to his own happiness, and to be led to it by objects in a moral way, and in the choice of means to be a free agent, and the guider of himself under God. As Governor of the rational creature, God doth continue that same course of ruling them by laws, and drawing them by ends and objects as their natures do require. And in this way he is not wanting to them ; his laws are now laws of grace, and universal in the tenor of the free gift and promise, for he hath there given life in Christ to all that will have it ; and the objects propounded are sufficient in their kind, to work even the most wonderful effects of men's souls, for they are God himself, and Christ, and glory. Besides, God giveth men natural faculties, that they may have the use of reason ; and there is nothing more unreasonable than to refuse this offered mercy. He giveth inducing arguments in the written word, and sermons, and addeth such mercies and afflictions, that one should think should bow the hardest heart. Besides, the strivings and motions of his Spirit within, are more than

we can give an account of. Now is not this as much as belongs to God as Governor of the creature according to its nature? And for the giving of a new nature, and creating new hearts in men, after all their rebellious rejecting of grace, this is a certain miracle of mercy, and belongs to God in another relation (even as the free chooser of his elect) and not directly as the Governor of the universe. This is from his special providence, and the former from his general. Now special providences are not to be as common as the general, nor to subvert God's ordinary, established course of government. If God please to stop Jordan, and dry up the Red Sea for the passage of the Israelites, and to cause the sun to stand still for Joshua, must he do so still for every man in the world, or else be accounted unmerciful? The sense of this objection is plainly this. God is not so rich in mercy, except he will new make all the world, or govern it above its nature. Suppose a king know his subjects to be so wicked, that they have every one a full design to famish or kill themselves, or poison themselves with something which is enticing by its sweetness, the king not only makes a law, strictly charging them all to forbear to touch that poison, but he sendeth special messengers to entreat them to it, and tell them the danger. If these men will not hear him, but wilfully poison themselves, is he therefore unmerciful? But suppose that he hath three or four of his sons that are infected with the same wickedness, and he will not only command and entreat them, but he will lock them up, or keep the poison from them, or will feed them by violence with better food, is he unmerciful unless he will do so by all the rest of his kingdom?

Lastly. If all this will not satisfy you; consider, 1. That it is most certain God is love, and infinite in mercy, and hath no pleasure in the death of sinners. 2. But it is utterly uncertain to us how God worketh on man's will inwardly by his Spirit. 3. Or yet what intolerable inconvenience there may be if God should work in other ways; therefore we must not upon such uncertainties deny certainties, nor from some unreasonable scruples about the manner of God's working grace, deny the blessed nature of God, which himself hath most evidently proclaimed to the world.

I have said the more of this, because I find satan harp so much on this string with many troubled souls, especially

on the advantage of some common doctrines. For false doctrine still tends to the overthrow of solid peace and comfort. Remember therefore before all other thoughts for the obtaining of peace, to get high thoughts of the gracious and lovely nature of God.

Direct. IV. Next this, 'Be sure that you deeply apprehend the gracious nature, disposition, and office of the Mediator, Jesus Christ.'

Though there can no more be said of the gracious nature of the Son than of the Father's, even that his goodness is infinite; yet these two advantages this consideration will add unto the former. 1. You will see here goodness and mercy in its condescension, and nearer to you than in the divine nature alone it was. Our thoughts of God are necessarily more strange, because of our infinite distance from the Godhead; and therefore our apprehensions of God's goodness will be the less working, because less familiar. But in Christ God is come down into our nature, and so Infinite goodness and mercy is incarnate. The man Christ Jesus is able now to save to the utmost all that come to God by him. We have a merciful High-Priest that is acquainted with our infirmities. 2. Herein we see the will of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that could be imagined. Here is more than merely a gracious inclination. It is an office of saving and shewing mercy also that Christ hath undertaken; even "to seek and to save that which was lost." To bring home straying souls to God. To be the great Peace-maker between God and man, to reconcile God to man, and man to God; and so to be the Head and Husband of his people. Certainly the devil strangely wrongeth poor, troubled souls in this point, that he can bring them to have such hard, suspicious thoughts of Christ, and so much to overlook the glory of mercy which so shineth in the face of the Son of Mercy itself. How can we more contradict the nature of Christ, and the Gospel description of him, than to think him a destroying hater of his creatures, and one that watcheth for our halting, and hath more mind to hurt us than to help us? How could he have manifested more willingness to save, and more tender compassion to the souls of men, than he hath fully manifested? That the Godhead should condescend to assume our nature is a thing so wonderful, even to astonishment, that it puts

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faith to it to apprehend it; for it is ten thousand times more condescension than for the greatest king to become a fly or a toad to save such creatures. And shall we ever have low and suspicious thoughts of the gracious and merciful nature of Christ, after so strange and full a discovery of it? If twenty were ready to drown in the sea, and if one that were able to swim and fetch all out, should cast himself into the water, and offer them his help, were it not foolish ingratitude for any to say, 'I know not yet whether he be willing to help me or not;' and so to have jealous thoughts of his good will, and so perish in refusing his help? How tenderly did Christ deal with all sorts of sinners. He professed that he "came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Did he weep over a rejected, unbelieving people, and was he desirous of their desolation? "How oft would he have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings (mark, that he would have done this for them that he cast off) and they would not?" When his disciples would have had "fire come down from heaven to consume those that refused him," he reproves them, and tells them, "They knew not what spirit they were of" (the common case of them that miscarry, by suffering their zeal to overrun their Christian wisdom and meekness). Yea, he prayeth for his crucifiers, and that on the cross, not forgetting them in the heat of his sufferings. Thus he doth by the wicked; but to those that follow him, his tenderness is unspeakable, as you would have said yourself, if you had but stood by and seen him washing his disciples' feet, and wiping them; or bidding Thomas put his finger into his side, "and be not faithless, but believing." Alas! that the Lord Jesus should come from heaven to earth, from glory into human flesh, and pass through a life of misery to a cross, and from the cross to the grave, to manifest openly to the world the abundance of his love, and the tenderness of his heart to sinners; and that after all this, we should suspect him of cruelty, or hard-heartedness and unwillingness to shew mercy; and that the devil can so far delude us, as to make us think of the Lamb of God as if he were a tiger or devourer!

But I will say no more of this, because Dr. Sibbs, in his "Bruised Reed," hath said so much already. Only remember, that if you would methodically proceed to the attaining

of solid comfort, this is the next stone that must be laid. You must be deeply possessed with apprehensions of the most gracious nature and office of the Redeemer, and the exceeding tenderness of his heart to lost sinners.

Direct. V. The next step in right order to comfort is this: 'You must believe and consider the full sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and ransom for all.'

The controversies about this you need not be troubled at. For as almost all confess this sufficiency, so the Scripture itself, by the plainness and fulness of its expression, makes it as clear as the light, that Christ died for ALL. The fuller proof of this I have given you in public, and shall do yet more publicly, if God will. If satan would persuade you either that no ransom or sacrifice was ever given for you, or that therefore you have no Redeemer to trust in, and no Saviour to believe in, and no sanctuary to fly to from the wrath of God, he must first prove you either to be no lost sinner, or to be a final, impenitent unbeliever; that is, that you are dead already; or else he must delude your understanding, to make you think that Christ died not for all; and then I confess he hath a sore advantage against your faith and comfort.

Direct. VI. The next thing in order to be done is this: 'Get clear apprehensions of the freeness, fulness, and universality of the new covenant or law of grace.'

I mean the promise of remission, justification, adoption, and salvation to all, so they will believe. No man on earth is excluded in the tenor of this covenant. And therefore certainly you are not excluded; and if not excluded, then you must needs be included. Shew where you are excluded if you can! You will say, 'But for all this, all men are not justified and saved.' *Answ.* True, because they will not be persuaded to accept the mercy that is freely given them.

The use that I would have you make of this, I will shew in the next.

Direct. VII. 'You must get the right understanding of the difference between general grace and special. And between the possibility, probability, conditional certainty, and absolute certainty of your salvation. And so between the comfort on the former ground and on the latter.'

36 DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING AND KEEPING

And here I shall open to you a rich mine of consolation.

Understand, therefore, that as every particular part of the house is built on the foundation, so is every part of special grace built on general grace. Understand also, that all the four last mentioned particulars do belong to this general grace. As also, that though no man can have absolute certainty of salvation, from the consideration of this general grace alone, yet may it afford abundance of relief to distressed souls, yea, much true consolation. Lastly, Understand that all that hear the Gospel may take part in this consolation, though they have no assurance of their salvation at all, no nor any special, saving grace.

Now when you understand these things well, this is the use that I would have you make of them.

1. Do not begin the way to your spiritual peace by inquiring after the sincerity of your graces, and trying yourselves by signs. Do not seek out for assurance of salvation in the first place, nor do not look and study after the special comforts which come from certainty of special grace, before you have learned, 1. To perform the duty. 2. And to receive the comforts which general grace affordeth. Such immethodical, disorderly proceedings keepeth thousands of poor, ignorant Christians in darkness and trouble almost all their days. Let the first thing you do, be to obey the voice of the Gospel, which calleth you to accept of Christ and special mercy. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Fix this deep in your mind, that the nature of the Gospel is first to declare to our understandings the most gracious nature, undertakings, and performances of Christ for us, which must be believed to be true. And 2. To offer this Christ with all his special mercy to every man to whom this Gospel comes, and to entreat them to accept Christ and life, which is freely given and offered to them. Remember then you are a lost sinner. For certain Christ and life in him is given and offered to you. Now your first work is, presently to accept it, not to make an unseasonable inquiry, whether Christ be yours. But to take him that he may be yours. If you were condemned, and a pardon were freely given you, on condition you would thankfully take it, and it were offered to you, and you en-

treated to take it, what would you do in this case? Would you spend your time and thoughts in searching whether this pardon be already yours? Or would you not presently take it that it may be yours? Or if you were ready to famish, and food were offered you, would you stand asking first, 'How shall I know that it is mine?' Or rather take and eat it, when you are sure it may be yours if you will. Let me entreat you therefore, when the devil clamours in your ears, 'Christ and salvation is none of thine,' suppose that this voice of God in the Gospel were still in your ears, yea, let it be still in your memory, 'O take Christ, and life in him, that thou mayst be saved:' still think that you hear Paul following you with these words: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." Will you but remember this, when you are on your knees in sorrow; and when you would fain have Christ and life, and you are afraid that God will not give them to you? I say, remember then, God stands by beseeching you to accept the same thing which you are beseeching him to give. God is the first suitor and solicitor. God prays you to take Christ, and you pray him to give you Christ. What have you now to do but to take him? And here understand, that this taking is no impossible business; it is no more but your hearty consenting, as I shall tell you more anon. If you did but well understand and consider, that believing is the great duty that God calls you to perform, and promiseth to save you if you do truly perform it; and that this believing is to take, or consent to have the same mercy which you pray for, and are troubled for fear lest you shall miss of it, even Christ and life in him; this would presently draw forth your consent, and that in so open and express a way, as you could not but discover it, and have the comfort of it. Remember this then, That your first work is to believe, or accept an offered Saviour.

2. You must learn (as I told you) to receive the comforts of universal or general grace, before you search after the comforts of special grace. I here suppose you so far sound in the doctrine of the Gospel, as neither with some on one hand, to look so much at special grace, as to deny that general grace, which is the ground of it, or presupposed to it. Nor with others, so far to look at universal mercy, as to de-

ny special. Satan will tell you, that all your duties have been done in hypocrisy, and you are unsound at the heart, and have not a drop of saving grace. You are apt to entertain this, and conclude that all this is true: 'If I had any grace, I should have more life, and love, and delight in God; more tenderness of heart, more growth in grace. I should not carry about such a rock in my breast; such a stupid, dull, insensible soul,' &c.

At the present, let us suppose that all this be true: yet see what a world of comfort you may gather from universal or general mercy. I have before opened to you four parts of it, in the cause of your happiness, and three in the effect, which may each of them afford much relief to your troubled soul.

1. Suppose you are yet graceless, is it nothing to you that it is a God of infinite mercy that you have to do with, whose compassions are ten thousand times greater than your dearest friends, or your own husbands?

Object. 'O but yet he will not save the graceless.'

Answ. True, but he is the more ready to give grace, that you may be saved. "If any of you (mark, any of you) do lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally (without desert) and upbraideth not (with our unworthiness or former faults), and it shall be given him;" James i. 4. "If you that are evil can give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it?" Luke xi. 13. Suppose your life were in the hands of your own husband, or your children's life in your hands, would it not exceedingly comfort you or them, to consider whose hands they are in, though yet you had no further assurance how you should be used? It may be you will say, 'But God is no Father to the graceless.' I answer, He is not their Father in so near and strict a sense as he is the Father of believers; but yet a Father he is, even to the wicked; and to convince men of his fatherly mercy to them, he often so stileth himself. He saith by Moses, Deut. xxxii. 6. to a wicked generation, whose spot was not the spot of his children, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?" And the prodigal could call him Father for his encouragement before he returned to him; Luke xv.

16—18. For my own part I must needs profess, that my soul hath more frequent support from the consideration of God's gracious and merciful nature, than from the promise itself.

2. Furthermore, Suppose you were graceless at the present; yet is it not an exceeding comfort, that there is one of such infinite compassions as the Lord Christ, who hath assumed our nature, and is come down to seek and save that which was lost; and is more tender-hearted to poor sinners than we can possibly conceive? Yea, who hath made it his office to heal, and relieve, and restore, and reconcile. Yea, that hath himself endured such temptations as many of ours; "For we have not a High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin. Let us therefore (saith the Holy Ghost) come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need;" Heb. iv. 15, 16. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that he might destroy, through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;" Heb. ii. 14—18. Have you discountenance from men? Christ had much more. Doth God seem to forsake you? So he did by Christ. Are you fain to lie on your knees crying for mercy? Why Christ in the days of his flesh was fain to offer up "strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him. And was heard in that he feared." It seems that Christ had distressing fears as well as you, though not sinful fears. Have you horrid temptations? Why Christ was tempted to cast himself headlong, and to worship the devil, for worldly preferment; yea, the devil had power to carry his body up and down to the pinnacle of the temple, and the top of a mountain. If he had such power of you, would you not think yourself certainly

his slave? I conclude therefore, as it is an exceeding ground of comfort to all the sick people in a city, to know that there is a most merciful and skilful physician, that is easily able to cure them, and hath undertaken to do it freely for all that will take him for their physician; so is it a ground of exceeding comfort to the worst of sinners, to all sinners that are yet alive, and have not blasphemed the Holy Ghost, to know what a merciful and efficient Saviour hath undertaken the work of man's redemption.

3. Also, Suppose yet that you are graceless, is it nothing that a sufficient sacrifice and ransom is given for you? This is the very foundation of all solid peace. I think this is a great comfort, to know that God looks now for no satisfaction at your hand; and that the number or greatness of your sins, as such, cannot now be your ruin. For certainly no man shall perish for want of the payment of his ransom, or of an expiatory sacrifice for sin, but only for want of a willing heart to accept him that hath freely ransomed them.

4. Also, Suppose you are graceless, is it nothing that God hath under his hand and seal made a full and free deed of gift, to you and all sinners, of Christ, and with him of pardon and salvation! And all this on condition of your acceptance or consent? I know the despisers of Christ shall be miserable for all this. But for you that would fain have Christ, is it no comfort to know that you shall have him if you will? And to find this to be the sum of the Gospel? I know you have often read those free offers, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come and drink," &c. Almost all that I have hitherto said to you is comprised in that one text, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And as I have shewed it you in the causes, what comfort even general mercy may afford, so let me a little shew it you in the effects. I mean, not only in that God is now satisfied; but as to yourself and every sinner, these three things are produced hereby.

1. There is now a possibility of salvation to you. And certainly even that should be a very great comfort. I know you will meet with some divines, who will tell you that this is no effect of Christ's death; and that else Christ should

die for God, if he procured him a power to save which he had not before. But this is no better than a reproaching of our Redeemer. Suppose that a traitor had so abused a king, that it will neither stand with his own honour, nor justice, nor laws to pardon him; if his compassion were so great, that his own son shall suffer for him, that so the king might be capable of pardoning him, without any diminution of his honour or justice; were it not a vile reproach, if this traitor should tell the prince that suffered for him, 'It was for your father that you suffered to procure him a power of pardoning, it was not for me?' It is true, the king could not pardon him, without satisfaction to his honour and justice. But this was not through any impotency, but because the thing was not fit to be done, and so was morally impossible. For in law we say, dishonest things are impossible. And it had been no less to the king if the traitor had not been pardoned. So it is in our case. And therefore Christ's sufferings could not be more eminently for us, than by enabling the offended Majesty to forgive us; and so taking the greatest impediment out of the way. For when impediments are once removed, God's nature is so gracious and prone to mercy, that he would soon pardon us when once it is fit to be done, and so morally possible in the fullest sense; only men's own unwillingness now stands in the way, and makes it to be not fully fit to be yet done. It is true, in a remote sense, the pardon of sin was always possible; but in the nearest sense it was impossible, till Christ made it possible by his satisfaction.

2. Nay, though you were yet graceless, you have now this comfort, that your salvation is probable as well as possible. You are very fair for it. The terms be not hard in themselves, on which it is tendered. For Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light, and his commands are not grievous. "The word is nigh you," even the offer of grace. You need not say, "Who shall ascend to heaven, or go down to hell?" Rom. x. But this will appear in the next.

3. Yea, this exceedingly comfort there is, even for them that are graceless, that their salvation is conditionally certain, and the condition is but their own willingness. They may all have Christ and life if they will. Now I desire you in all your doubts, that you will well consider and improve this one truth and ground of comfort. Would you, in the

midst of your groans, and complaints and fears, take it for a small mercy, to be certain that you shall have Christ if you will? When you are praying for Christ in fear and anguish of spirit, if an angel or voice from heaven should say to you 'It shall be unto thee according to thy will, if thou wilt have Christ and live in him, thou shalt:?' Would this be no comfort to you? Would it not revive you and overcome your fears?

By this time I hope you see what abundance of comfort general mercy or grace may afford the soul, before it perceive (yea, or receive) any special grace; though few of those that receive not special grace can make use of general, yet it is propounded to them as well as others.

1. All the terrifying temptations which are grounded on misrepresentations of God, as if he were a cruel destroyer to be fled from, are dispelled by the due consideration of his goodness, and the deep settled apprehensions of his gracious, merciful, lovely nature (which indeed is the first work of true religion, and the very master radical act of true grace, and the chief maintainer of spiritual life and motion).

2. All these temptations are yet more effectually dispelled, by considering this merciful divine nature dwelling in flesh, becoming man, by condescending to the assumption of our human nature; and so come near us, and assuming the office of being the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Saviour of the world.

3. All your doubts and fears that proceed from your former sins, whether of youth or of age, of ignorance or of knowledge, and those which proceed from your legal unworthiness, have all a present remedy in the fulness and sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, even for all the world; so that no sin (except the excepted sin) is so great, but it is fully satisfied for; and though you are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; and he came into the world to save only the unworthy (in the strict and legal sense).

4. All your doubts and fears that arise from an apprehension of God's unwillingness to shew you mercy, and to give you Christ and life in him, arise from the misapprehensions of Christ's unwillingness to be yours; or at least from the uncertainty of his willingness; these have all a sufficient remedy in the general extent, and tenor of the new covenant. Can you doubt whether God be willing to

give you Christ and life, when he had given them already, even by a deed of gift under his hand, and by a law of grace? 1 John v. 10—12.

Object. ‘But yet all are not pardoned, and possessed of Christ, and so saved.’

Answ. I told you, that is because they will not; so that (I pray you mark it well) God hath in these four means before mentioned, given even to the graceless so much ground of comfort, that nothing, but their unwillingness to have Christ, is left to be their terror. For though sin be not actually remitted to them, yet is it conditionally remitted, viz. If they will but accept of Christ offered them. Will you remember this, when your doubts are greatest, and you conclude, that certainly Christ is not yours, because you have no true grace? Suppose it to be true, yet still know, that Christ may be yours if you will, and when you will. This comfort you may have when you can find no evidences of true grace in yourself. So much for that direction.

Direct. VIII. The next thing that you have to do, for building up a stable comfort, and settling your conscience in a solid peace, is this, ‘Be sure to get and keep a right understanding of the nature of saving faith.’

As you must have right thoughts of the covenant of grace (of which before), the want thereof doth puzzle and confound very many Christians; so you must be sure to have right thoughts of the condition of the covenant. For indeed that grace which causeth you to perform this condition, is your first special saving grace, which you may take as a certain evidence of your justification. And this condition is the very link which conjoineth all the general foregoing grace to all the rest of the following special grace. The Scripture is so full and plain in assuring pardon and salvation to all true believers, that if you can be sure you are a believer, you need not make any doubt of your interest in Christ, and your salvation. Seeing therefore that all the question will be, Whether you have true faith? Whether you do perform the condition of the new covenant? (for all other doubts God hath given you sufficient ground to resolve, as is said) how much then doth it concern you to have a right understanding of the nature of this faith? Which that you may have, let me tell you briefly what it is. Man’s soul hath two faculties, understanding and will: ac-

cordingly the objects of man's soul (all beings which it is to receive) have two modifications; truth and goodness (as those to be avoided are evil). Accordingly God's word or Gospel hath two parts; the revelation of truth, and the offer and promise of some good. This offered good is principally and immediately Christ himself to be joined to us by covenant, as our head and husband. The secondary consequential good, is pardon, justification, reconciliation, adoption, further sanctification and glorification, which are all offered with Christ. By this you may see what saving faith is; it is first, a believing that the Gospel is true; and then an accepting of Christ therein offered to us, with his benefits; or a consenting that he be ours, and we be his; which is nothing but a true willingness to have an offered Christ. Remember this well, that you may make use of it, when you are in doubt of the truth of your faith. Thousands of poor souls have been in the dark, and unable to see themselves to be believers, merely for want of knowing what saving faith is. The Papists place almost all in the mere assent of the understanding. Some of our Reformers made it to be either an assurance of the pardon of our own sins, or a strong persuasion of their pardon, excluding doubting; or (the most moderate) a persuasion of our particular pardon, though mixed with some doubting. The Antinomians strike in with them, and say the same. Hence some divines conclude, that justification and remission go before faith, because the act doth always suppose its object. For they thought that remission already past was the object of justifying faith, supposing faith to be nothing else but a belief that we are pardoned. Yea, ordinarily, it hath been taught in the writings of our greatest refuters of the Papists, 'That this belief is properly a divine faith, or the belief of a divine testimony, as is the believing of any proposition written in the Scripture (a foul error, which I have confuted in my Book of Rest, part iii. chap. vii). Most of late have come nearer the truth, and affirmed justifying faith to consist in affiance, or recumbency, or resting on Christ for salvation. No doubt this is one act of justifying faith, but not that which a poor troubled soul should first search after and try itself by (except by affiance, any should mean as Amesius doth, election of Christ, and then it is the same act which I am asserting, but very unfitly expressed). For, 1. Affiance is not the

principal act nor that wherein the very life of justifying faith doth consist, but only an imperate allowing act, and an effect of the vital act, (which is consent, or willing, or accepting Christ offered ;) for it lieth mainly in that which we call the sensitive part, or the passions of the soul. 2. It is therefore less constant, and so unfitter to try by. For many a poor soul that knows itself unfeignedly willing to have Christ, yet feeleth not a resting on him, or trusting in him, and therefore cries out, 'O I cannot believe;' and think they have no faith. For recumbency, affiance, or resting on Christ, implieth that easing of themselves, or casting off their fears, or doubts, or cares, which true believers do not always find. Many a poor soul complains, 'O I cannot rest on Christ; I cannot trust him!' who yet would have him to be their Lord and Saviour, and can easily be convinced of their willingness. 3. Besides affiance is not the adequate act of faith, suited to the object in that fulness as it must be received, but willingness or acceptance is. Christ is rested on not only for ourselves as our deliverer, but he is accepted also for himself as our Lord and Master. The full proof of these I have performed in other writings, and oft in your hearing in public, and therefore omit them now. Be sure then to fix this truth deep in your mind, 'That justifying faith is not an assurance of our justification; no, nor a persuasion or belief that we are justified or pardoned, or that Christ died more for us than for others. Nor yet is affiance or resting on Christ the vital principle, certain, constant, full act; but it is the understanding's belief of the truth of the Gospel, and the will's acceptance of Christ and life offered to us therein; which acceptance is but the hearty consent or willingness that he be yours, and you his' This is the faith which must justify and save you.

Object. But, 1. 'May not wicked men be willing to have Christ? 2. And do not you oft tell us that justifying faith comprehends love to Christ and thankfulness, and that it receiveth him as a Lord to be obeyed, as well as a deliverer? And that repentance and sincere obedience are parts of the condition of the new covenant?'

Answ. I will give as brief a touch now on these as may be, because I have handled them in fitter places.

1. Wicked men are willing to have remission, justification, and freedom from hell (for no man can be willing to be

unpardoned, or to be damned;) but they are not willing to have Christ himself in that nature and office which he must be accepted; that is, as an holy head and husband to save both from the guilt and power, and all defilement and abode of sin, and to rule them by his law, and guide them by his Spirit, and to make them happy by bringing them to God, that being without sin, they may be perfectly pleasing and amiable in his sight, and enjoy him for ever. Thus is Christ offered, and thus to be accepted of all that will be saved; and thus no wicked man will accept him (but when he ceaseth to be wicked). 2. To cut all the rest short in a word, I say, That in this fore-described willingness or acceptance, repentance, love, thankfulness, resolution to obey, are all contained, or nearly implied, as I have elsewhere manifested; so that the heart of saving faith is this acceptance of Christ, or willingness to have him to justify, sanctify, guide, and govern you. Find but this willingness, and you find all the rest, whether you expressly see them or not. So much for that direction.

Direct. IX. Having thus far proceeded, in discovering and improving the general grounds of comfort, and then in discovering the nature of faith, which gives you right to the special mercies of the covenant following it; your next work must be, 'To perform this condition by actual believing.'

Your soul stands in extreme need of a Saviour. God offereth you a Saviour in the Gospel. What then have you next to do but to accept him? Believe that this offer is general, and therefore to you. And that Christ is not set to sale, nor doth God require you to bring a price in your hand, but only heartily and thankfully to accept of what he freely giveth you. This must be done before you fall on trying your graces to get assurance, for you must have grace before you can discover it; and this is the first proper special saving grace (as it compriseth that knowledge and assent which necessarily go before it). This is not only the method for those that yet never believed, but also for them that have lost the sense of their faith, and so the sight of their evidence. Believe again, that you may know you do believe; or at least may possess an accepted Saviour. When God in the Gospel bids you take Jesus Christ, and beseecheth you to be reconciled to him, what will you say to him? If your heart answer, 'Lord I am willing, I will ac-

cept of Christ and be thankful ;' why then the match is made between Christ and you, and the marriage-covenant is truly entered, which none can dissolve. If Christ were not first willing, he would not be the suitor, and make the motion ; and if he be willing, and you be willing, what can break the match ? If you will say, ' I cannot believe ;' if you understand what you say, either you mean that you cannot believe the Gospel is true, or else that you cannot be willing that Christ should be yours. If it be the former, and speak truly, then you are a flat infidel (yet many temptations to doubt of the truth of Scripture, a true believer may have, yea, and actual doubtings ; but his faith prevaieth, and is victorious over them) ; but if you really doubt whether the Gospel be true, use God's means for the discovery of its truth. Read what I have written in the second part of my Book of Rest. I will undertake now more confidently than ever I did, to prove the truth of Scripture by plain, full, undeniable force of reason. But I suppose this is none of your case. If therefore when you say, that you cannot believe, you mean, that you cannot accept an offered Christ, or be willing to have him ; then I demand, 1. What is your reason ? The will is led by the reason of the understanding. If you be not willing, there is something that persuades you to be unwilling. This reason must be from something real, or else upon a mistake, upon supposal of something that is not in being. If it be upon mistake, either it is that you be not convinced of Christ's willingness to be yours ; and if you thought he did consent, you would consent willingly ; if this be it, you do truly believe while you think you do not ; for you do consent (and that is all on your part to make the match) and Christ doth certainly consent, though you do not understand it. In this case it concerneth you, to understand better the extent of the new covenant, and then you will be past doubt of the willingness of Christ, and see that wherever the match breaks, it is only for want of consent in men ; for Christ is the first suitor, and hath long ago in the covenant proclaimed his consent, to be the head and husband of every sinner, on condition they will but consent to be his.

If your mistake be from any false apprehension of the nature of Christ, as if he were not a sufficient Saviour, or were an enemy to your comfort, that he would do you more harm

than good ; if these mistakes are prevalent, then you do not know Christ, and therefore must presently better study him in the Gospel, till you have prevailed over such ignorant and blasphemous conceits (but none of this I suppose is your case).

If then the reason why you say you cannot believe, be from any thing that is really in Christ (and not upon mistake), then it must be either from some dislike of his saving work, by which he would pardon you, and save you from damnation (but that is impossible, for you cannot be willing to be damned or unpardoned, till you lose your reason) : or else it is from a dislike of his work of sanctification, by which he would cleanse your heart and life, by saving you from your sinful nature and actions ; some grudging against Christ's holy and undefiled laws and ways will be in the best, while there is that flesh in them which lusteth against the Spirit, so that they cannot do the things they would. But if truly you have such a dislike of a sinless condition, through the love of any sin or creature, that you cannot be willing to have Christ to cure you, and cleanse you from that sin, and make you holy : I say, if this be true, in a prevailing degree, so that if Christ and holiness were offered you, you would not accept them, then it is certain you have not true faith. And in this case it is easily to discern, that your first work lieth not in getting comfort or ease to your troubled mind ; but in getting better conceits of Christ and a holy state and life, that so you may be willing of Christ, as Christ is of you, and so become a true believer. And here I would not leave you at that loss as some do, as if there were nothing for you to do for the getting of faith ; for certainly God hath prescribed you means for that end. " Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God preached ;" Rom. x. 17. 1. Therefore see that you wait diligently on this ordinance of God. Read the Scriptures daily, and search them to see whether you may not there find that holiness is better than sin. 2. And however some seducers may tell you, that wicked men ought not to pray, yet be sure that you lie on your knees before God, and importunately beg that he would open your eyes, and change your heart, and shew you so far the evil of sin, and the want and worth of Christ and holiness, that you may be unfeignedly glad to accept his offer.

Object. 'But the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.'

Answ. 1. You must distinguish between wicked men, as actually wicked, and going on in the prosecution of their wickedness; and wicked men, as they have some good in them, or are doing some good, or are attempting a return to God. 2. You must distinguish between real prayer and seeming prayer. 3. You must distinguish between full acceptance of prayer, when God delighteth in them, and an acceptance only to some particular end, not imitating the acceptance of the person with his prayer: and between acceptance fully promised (as certain) and acceptance but half promised (as probable). And upon these distinctions I shall answer your objections in the conclusion.

1. When wicked men pray to God to prosper them in their wickedness, yea, or to pardon them while they intend to go on in it, and so to give them an indulgence in sin; or when they think with a few prayers for some good, which they can endure, to put by that holiness which they cannot endure, and so to make a cloak for their rebellion, these prayers are all an abomination to the Lord.

2. When men use the words of a prayer, without the desire of the thing asked, this is no prayer, but equivocally so called, as a carcass is a man; and therefore no wonder if God abhor that prayer, which is truly no prayer.

3. God hath not made a full promise, ascertaining any wicked man, while wicked, that he will hear his prayer; for all such promises are made to believers.

4. God doth never so hear an unbeliever's prayer, as to accept his person with his prayer, or to take a complacency in them. So much for the negative.

Now for the affirmative, I add; 1. Prayer is a duty which God enjoined even wicked men (I could prove it by an hundred Scripture texts.)

2. There may be some good desires in unbelievers, which they may express in prayer, and these God may so far hear as to grant them, as he did in part to Ahab.

3. An unbeliever may lie under preparing grace, and be on his way in returning towards God, though yet he be not come to saving faith; and in this state he may have many good desires, and such prayers as God will hear.

4. Though God have not flatly engaged himself to unbelievers, so as to give them a certainty of hearing their prayers, and giving them true grace on the improvement of their naturals, yet he hath not only appointed them this and other means to get grace, but also given them half promises, or strong probabilities of speeding, so much as may be a sufficient encouragement to any such sinner to call on God, and use his means. For as he appointeth not any vain means to man, so no man can name that man who did improve his naturals to the utmost, and in particular, sought God in prayer, so far as a natural man may do, who yet missed of grace, and was rejected (this is the true mean between Pelagianism and Antinomianism in this point).

5. When God calls unbelievers to prayer, he withal calls them to believe. And when he works their heart to prayer by that call, he usually withal works them to believe, or at least towards believing. If he that was unwilling to have Christ, do pray God to make him willing, it is a beginning of willingness already, and the way to get more willingness. In prayer God useth to give in the thing prayed for, of this kind.

6. Prayer is the soul's motion God-ward: and to say an unbeliever should not pray, is to say he should not turn to God; who yet saith to the wicked, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way;" &c. Isaiah lv. 6, 7.

7. Prayer hath two parts; desire is the soul of it, and expression is the body. The soul can live separated from the body, but so cannot the body separated from the soul. So can desire without expression, but not expression without desire. When our blind Antinomians (the great subverters of the Gospel, more than the law) do rail against ministers for persuading wicked men to pray, they are against us for persuading men to desire that they pray for; prayer having desire for its soul. And do not those men deserve to be exterminated the churches and societies of the saints, who dare say to a wicked unbeliever, 'Desire not faith? Desire not to leave thy wickedness? Desire not grace? or Christ? or God? And that will proclaim abroad the world (as I have oft heard of them with zealous reproaches) that our ministers are legalists, seducers, ignorant of the mysteries of the Gospel, because they persuade poor sinners to pray for

faith, grace, and Christ; that is to desire these, and to express their desires; which in effect is to persuade them to repent, believe, and turn to God. Indeed, if these blind seducers had ever heard our ministers persuading wicked men to dissemble and lie to God, and ask faith, grace and Christ with their tongues, but not desire them in their hearts, then had they sufficient grounds for their reviling language (but I have been too long on this). I may therefore boldly conclude, that they that find themselves unbelievers, that is, unwilling to have Christ to deliver them from sin, must use this second means to get faith, even earnest frequent prayer for it to God.

3. Let such also see that they avoid wicked seducing company and occasions of sin; and be sure that they keep company with men fearing God, especially joining with them in their holy duties.

4. Lastly, let such be sure that they use that reason which God hath given them, to consider frequently, retiredly, seriously, of the vanity of all those things that steal away their hearts from Christ; and of the excellency of holiness, and how blessed a state it is to have nothing in us of heart or life that is displeasing to God, but to be such as he taketh full delight in; also of the certainty of the damnation of unbelievers, and the intolerableness of their torments; and of the certainty and inconceivable greatness of believers' everlasting happiness. If wicked unbelievers would but do what they can in daily, serious, deep considering of these things, and the like, they would have no cause to despair of obtaining faith and sanctification. Believing is a rational act. God bids you not to believe any thing without reason, nor to accept or consent to any thing without full reason to cause you to consent. Think then often and soberly of those reasons that should move you to consent, and of the vanity of these that hinder you from consenting, and this is God's way for you to obtain faith or consent.

Remember then, that when you have understood and improved general grounds of comfort (nay before you can come to any full improvement of them) your next business is to believe; to consent to the match with Christ, and to take him for your Lord and Saviour. And this duty must be looked to and performed, before you look after special com-

fort. But I said somewhat of this before under the sixth head, and therefore will say no more now.

Direct. X. When you have gone thus far, your soul is safe, and you are past your greatest dangers, though yet you are not past your fears ; your next work therefore for peace and comfort is this ; 'To review and take notice of your own faith, and thence to gather assurance of the certainty of your justification, and adoption, and right to glory.'

The sum of this direction lieth in these things :

1. See that you do not content yourself with the fore-mentioned general comforts, without looking after assurance and special comforts. The folly of this I have manifested in the third part of my Book of Rest, about Self-examination.

2. See that you dream not of finding assurance and special comfort from mere general grounds. This is the delusion of many Antinomians, and of most of our profane people (who I find are commonly of the Antinomian faith naturally, without teaching). For men to conclude that they shall certainly be saved, merely because God is merciful, or Christ is tender-hearted to sinners, and would not that any should perish, but all should come to repentance ; or because God delights not in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he repent and live ; or because Christ died for them ; or because God hath given Christ and life in the Gospel to all, on condition of believing ; these are all but mere delusions. Much comfort, as I have shewed you, may be gathered from these generals ; but no certainty of salvation, or special comfort can be gathered from them alone.

3. See that you reject the Antinomian doctrine or dotage, which would teach you to reject the trial and judging of your state by signs of grace in yourself, and tell you that it is only the Spirit that must assure, by witnessing your adoption ; I will further explain this caution when I have added the rest.

4. And on the other extreme, do not run to marks unseasonably, but in the order here laid down.

5. Nor trust to unsafe marks.

6. And therefore do not look at too many ; for the true ones are but few. I do but name these things to you, because I have more fully handled them in my Book of Rest,

whither I must refer you. And so I return to the third caution.

I have in the forementioned book told you, what the office of the Spirit is in assuring us, and what the use of marks are. The Spirit witnesseth first objectively, and so the Spirit and marks are all one. For it is the Spirit dwelling in us that is the witness or proof that we are God's sons ; for he that hath not his Spirit is none of his. And the Spirit is not discerned by us in its essence, but in its workings ; and therefore to discern these workings, is to discern the Spirit, and these workings are the marks that we speak of : so that the Spirit witnesseth our sonship, as a reasonable soul witnesseth that you are a man and not a beast. You find by the acts of reason, that you have a reasonable soul, and then you know, that having a reasonable soul, you certainly are a man. So you find by the works or fruits of the Spirit, that you have the Spirit (that is, by marks ; and Paul enumerates the fruits of the Spirit to that end), and then by finding that you have the Spirit you may certainly know that you are the child of God. 2. Also, as the reasonable soul is its own discerner by the help of the body (while it is in it) and so witnesseth our humanity effectively as well as objectively (but first in order objectively, and next effectively) ; so doth the Spirit effectively discover itself to the soul, by illuminating us to discern it, and exciting us to search, and giving us that spiritual taste and feeling of its workings, and so of its presence, by which it is best known. But still it witnesseth objectively, first, and its effective witnessing is but the causing us to discern its objective witness. Or (to speak more plainly), the Spirit witnesses first and principally, by giving us those graces and workings which are our marks ; and then, secondly, by helping us to find and feel those workings or marks in ourselves ; and then, lastly, by raising comforts in the soul upon that discovery. Take heed therefore of expecting any such inward witness of the Spirit, as some expect, viz. a discovery of your adoption directly, without first discovering the signs of it within you ; as if by an inward voice he should say to you, ' Thou art a child of God and thy sins are pardoned.'

This that I described to you, is the true witness of the Spirit. This mistake is so dangerous, that I had thought to have made it a peculiar direction by itself, to warn you of

it; and now I have gone so far, I will dispatch it here. Two dangerous consequents I find do follow this unwarrantable expectation of the first immediate efficient revelation that we are adopted.

1. Some poor souls have languished in doubtings and trouble of mind almost all their days, in expectation of such a kind of witness as the Spirit useth not to give; when in the mean time they have other sufficient means of comfort, and knew not how to improve them; yea, they had the true witness of the Spirit in his inhabitation and holy workings, and did not know it; but run as Samuel did to Eli, not knowing the voice of God; and look for the Spirit's testimony when they had it, as the Jews for Elias and the Messias.

2. Others do more dangerously err, by taking the strong conceit of their own fantasy for the witness of the Spirit; as soon as they do but entertain the opinion that it must be such a witness of the Spirit, without the use of marks, that must assure men of their adoption, presently they are confident that they have that witness themselves. It is scarce likely to be God's Spirit that is so ready upon the mere change of an opinion. The devil useth to do as much to cherish presumption, as to destroy true faith and assurance. It is a shrewd sign that our persuasions of our truth of grace is a delusion, when we find the devil a friend to it, and helping it on. And it is a probable sign it is a good persuasion, when we find the devil an enemy to it, and still troubling us and endeavouring our disquiet.

And here I remember the scruple that troubleth some about the spirit of bondage, and the spirit of adoption. But you must understand, that by the spirit of bondage is meant that spirit, and those operations on the soul which the law of works did naturally beget in those that were under it; which was to be partly in bondage, to a task of ceremonious duties, and partly to the curse and obligation to punishment for disobedience, without any power to justify. They were said therefore to be in bondage to the law; and the law was said to be a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear: Acts xv.

And by the spirit of adoption is meant, 1. That spirit, or those qualifications or workings in their souls, which by the Gospel God giveth only to his sons. 2. And which raise

in us some childlike affections to God, inclining us in all our wants to run to him in prayer, as to a Father, and to make our moan to him, and open our griefs, and cry for redress, and look to him, and depend on him as a child on the father. This spirit of adoption you may have, and yet not be certain of God's special love to you. The knowledge only of his general goodness and mercy, may be a means to raise in you true childlike affections. You may know God to have fatherly inclinations to you, and yet doubt whether he will use you as a child, for want of assurance of your own sincerity. And you may hope God is your Father, when yet you may apprehend him to be a displeased, angry father, and so he may be more your terror than your comfort. Are not you ready in most of your fears, and doubts, and troubles, to go to God before all other for relief? And doth not your heart sigh and groan to him, when you can scarcely speak? Doth not your troubled spirit there find its first vent? And say, 'Lord kill me not: forsake me not; my life is in thy hands; O soften this hard heart; make this carnal mind more spiritual! O be not such a stranger to my soul! Wo to me that I am so ignorant of thee! so disaffected to thee! so backward and disinclined to holy communion with thee; Wo to me, that can take no more pleasure in thee! and am so mindless and disregardful of thee! O that thou wouldst stir up in me more lively desires, and workings of my soul towards thee! and suffer me not to lie at such a distance from thee!' Are not such as these the breathings of your spirit? Why these are childlike breathings after God! This is crying 'Abba, Father.' This is the work of the spirit of adoption, even when you fear God will cast you off. You much mistake (and those that tell you so) if you think that the spirit of adoption lieth only in a persuasion that you are God's child, or that you may not have the spirit of adoption, without such a persuasion of God's adopting you. For God may adopt you, and give you that spirit which he gives only to his children, and possess you with true filial affections towards him, before ever you know yourself to be adopted; much more, though you may have frequent returning doubts of your adoption.

Having thus shewed you how far you may expect the witness of the Spirit, and how far you may and must make use of marks and qualifications, or actions of your own, for

the obtaining of assurance and settled peace, I shall add an answer to the principal objections of the Antinomians against this.

Object. They say, This is to draw men from Christ to themselves, and from the Gospel to the law; to lay their comforts, and build their peace upon any thing in themselves, is to forsake Christ, and make themselves their own saviours: and those teachers that persuade them to this, are teachers of the law, and false prophets, who draw men from Christ to themselves. All our own righteousness is as a menstruous cloth, and our best works are sin; and therefore we may not take up our assurance or comforts from them. We shall be always at uncertainties, and at a loss, or inconstant, up and down in our comforts, as long as we take them from any signs in ourselves: also our own graces are imperfect, and therefore unfit to be the evidences for our assurance.

Answ. Because I am not now purposely confuting the Antinomians, but only forearming you against their assaults; I shall not therefore give you half that I should otherwise say, for the explication of this point, and the confutation of their errors, but only so much as is necessary to your preservation: which I do, because they pretend to be the only preachers of free grace, and the only right comforters of troubled consciences; and because they have written so many books to that end, which if they fall into your hands may seem so specious, as that you may need some preservative. I suppose you remember what I have taught you so oft, concerning the difference of the law of works, and the law of grace, with their different conditions. Upon which supposition I explicate the point thus. 1. No man may look at his own graces or duties as his legal righteousness; that is, such as for which the law of works will pronounce him righteous. Nor yet may he take them for part of his legal righteousness, in conjunction with Christ's righteousness, as the other part; but here must go wholly out of ourselves, and deny and disclaim all such righteousness of our own. We have no works which make the reward to be not of grace but of debt. We must not once think that our graces, duties, or sufferings, can make satisfaction to God's justice for our sin and unrighteousness; nor yet that they are any part of that satisfaction. Here we ascribe all to

Christ, who is the only sacrifice and ransom. 4. Nor must we think that our duties or graces are properly meritorious ; this also is to be left as the sole honour of Christ. 5. Yet that we may and must raise our assurance and comforts from our own graces and duties, shall appear in these clear reasons following, which shew also the grounds on which we may do it.

1. Pardon, justification, and adoption, and salvation, are all given to us in the Gospel only conditionally (if we believe), and the condition is an act, or rather several acts of our own. Now till the condition be performed, no man can have any certainty that the benefit shall be his, nor can he by any other means (ordinarily) be certain of the benefit, but by that which ascertains him that he hath performed the condition. God saith, "He that believeth shall be saved." No man can know then that he shall be saved, till he first know that he believeth. Else he should know either contrary to that which is written, or more than that which is written ; and justification and adoption should be given some other way than by the Gospel promise, (for that promise giveth them only conditionally, and so suspendeth the actual right, upon the performance of the condition). But if any can shew any other way, by which God maketh over pardon and adoption, besides the Gospel promise, let them do it ; but I will not promise suddenly to believe them, for it was never yet shewed as I know of. Also, if men must not look at their own performance of the condition, to prove their right to the benefit, then either all or none must believe that they have that right ; for the promise saith, "He that believeth shall be saved." And this is a promise of life conditionally to all. If all must believe that they shall be saved, then most of the world must believe a lie. If the true believer may not therefore conclude that he shall be saved, because he performeth the condition of the promise, then no man may believe it. And for that absolute promise of the new heart, no man can, or may believe that it is his, till he have that new heart which it promiseth ; that is, till it be fulfilled. For there is no mark by which a man can know whether that promise belong to him or no beforehand, and if all should believe that it belongs to them, most would find it false.

2. God hath not redeemed us by his Son to be lawless.

To be without law is to be without government. We are without the law; that is, of works or of Moses, but not without law; Jesus Christ is our ruler, and he hath made us a law of grace; an easy yoke, and commands that are not grievous. This law hath precepts, promises, and threats; it must needs be either obeyed or disobeyed; and so the penalty must be due or not due; and the reward due or not due. He that performs the condition, and so to whom the reward is due, and not the penalty, is righteous in the sense of this law. As when we are accused to be sinners against the law of works, and so to deserve the penalty of that law, we must confess all, and plead the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction for our justification. So when we are accused to be final unbelievers or impenitent, and so not to have performed the conditions of the new covenant, we must be justified by our own faith and repentance, the performance of that condition; and must plead, not guilty. And so far our own acts are our evangelical righteousness, and that of such necessity, that without it no man can have part in Christ's righteousness, nor be saved. I would desire any man else to tell me, what else he will plead at judgment, when the accuser chargeth him (or if he do so charge him) with final unbelief? Will he confess it, and say, 'Christ hath believed and repented for me?' That is as much as to say, 'Christ was a believer for infidels, that he might save infidels.' All false. If he will not say thus (and lying will do no good) then must he plead his own believing and repenting, as his righteousness, in opposition to that accusation. And if it be of such use then, and be called a hundred times in Scripture, "our righteousness," and we righteous for it, then doubtless we may accordingly try by it now, whether we shall then be able to come off and be justified, or no; and so may build our comfort on it.

3. Conscience is a witness and judge within us, and doth, as under God, accuse and condemn, or excuse and acquit. Now if conscience must absolve us only so far as we are innocent, or do well, or are qualified with grace, then it is impossible but these our qualifications and actions should be some ground of our comfort. See Acts xxiv. 16. xxiii. 1. Rom. ii. 15, 16.

4. Those which are our graces and works, as we are the subjects and agents, are the graces and works of God, of

Christ, of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. If therefore we may not rejoice in our own works, or graces, then we may not rejoice in the works or gifts of God, Christ, or the Holy Ghost. And,

5. Our graces are the spiritual life or health of the soul, and our holy actions are the vital operations. Now life and health are necessary; rejoicing, delighting things of themselves; and vital actions are necessarily pleasant and delectable.

6. Our graces and holy actions must needs rejoice us in respect of their objects; for the object of our love, trust, hope, meditation, prayer, conference, &c. is God himself, and the Lord Jesus, and the joys of heaven. And how can such actions choose but rejoice us!

7. Yea, rejoicing itself, and delighting ourselves in God is not only one part of our duty, but that great duty wherein lieth the height of our Christianity. And how vain a speech is it to say, that we may not take up our comforts from our own works, nor rejoice in any thing of our own; when even rejoicing itself, and delighting, and comforting ourselves, is one part of our duty?

8. As God in Christ is the chief object and ground of our comfort (so that we must rejoice in nothing but God, and the cross of Christ, in that kind, or in co-ordination with them); so it is the office of every grace and holy work, and ordinance, and means, to be subservient to Christ, either for the attaining of Christ, or applying his merits, or they are the effects of his merits. Now if we must love and rejoice in Christ principally, then must we needs love and rejoice in all those things that stand in a necessary subordination to him, in their places. And therefore to say, 'We must rejoice in Christ only, and therefore not in any graces or duties of our own,' is as wise, as if a wife should cast her husband's clothes and meat out of doors and say, 'You charged me to admit none into my chamber but yourself.' Or as if a physician, having told his patients, 'I will cure you, if you will trust me only for the cure;' thereupon the patients should cast away his medicines, and shut the doors against his servants and apothecaries, and say, 'We must trust none but the physician.'

9. All the failings of our duties are pardoned, and they accepted in Christ; and therefore we may rejoice in them.

60 DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING AND KEEPING

10. Our duties have a double tendency to our salvation.
1. As the condition to which God hath promised it as the crown and reward (in a hundred texts of Scripture), and may we not comfort ourselves in that which God promiseth heaven to? 2. As a natural means to our obedience and further protection (as watchfulness, meditation, &c. tend to destroy sin), as Paul saith to Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, and in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee;" 1 Tim. iv. 16. and may we not take comfort in that which tends to save our own and our brethren's souls?

11. We shall be judged according to our works; therefore we must judge ourselves according to our works; and so must judge our state good or bad, according to our works. For can man judge by a righter way than God will? At least is it not lawful for man to judge as God doth?

12. We must judge of others in probability, according to their external works, even the tree by the fruits; therefore we must judge of ourselves in certainty, according to our internal and external works together, which we may certainly know.

13. If we may not rejoice in any of our graces, then we may not be thankful for them, for thankfulness is accompanied with joy; but we must be thankful.

14. If we may not rejoice in our duties, we may not repent or sorrow for the neglect of them; and if we may not rejoice in our graces, we may not lament the want of them (for these are as the two ends of the balance, that one goes down when the other goes up; or as day and night, light and darkness). But the consequent is intolerable.

15. This would overthrow all religion. For what a man cannot rejoice in, he cannot love, he cannot esteem, regard, be careful to obtain, be fearful of losing, &c.

16. God delighteth in our graces and holy duties, and is well pleased with them; and therefore it is lawful and needful that we do as God doth; Jer. ix. 24. Heb. xi. 5. Abel's sacrifice by faith obtained testimony that he pleased God. "To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" Heb. xiii. 16.

17. The saints of God have not only tried themselves by their graces and duties, and commanded others to try by

them, but have gloried and rejoiced in their duties and sufferings. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation among you;" 2 Cor. i. 12. "They gloried that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ;" Acts v. 41. "I have therefore whereof I may glory in Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God;" Rom. xv. 17. "We glory in tribulation," &c.; chap. v. 3. "Though I should desire to glory, I should not be a fool. I glory in mine infirmities;" 2 Cor. xii. 6. 9. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me;" Jer. ix. 24. "I had rather die than any should make my glorying void;" 1 Cor. ix. 15. "Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another;" Gal. vi. 4.

18. Scripture nameth many of our own graces and duties, as the certain marks of our justification and right to glory. Even Christ with his own mouth, gives us many; "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" Matt. vi. 21. "He that doth evil hateth the light, &c. but he that doth good cometh to the light, that," &c." John iii. 10. Matt. v. is full of such; "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the pure in heart," &c.

19. We may rejoice in other men's good works and graces (and do, if we be true Christians), therefore in our own.

20. We may rejoice in God's outward mercies; therefore much more in inward, and such as accompany salvation. All these arguments prove, that we may take up our comfort from our own gracious qualifications and actions (not in opposition to Christ, but in subordination to him), and most of them prove that we may fetch our assurance of salvation from them, as undoubted evidences thereof.

I have said the more in answer to these objections, 1. Because never any came with fairer pretences of exalting Christ, and maintaining the honour of his righteousness and free grace, and of denying ourselves and our own righteousness. 2. And yet few doctrines more dishonour Christ, and destroy the very substance of religion. Even as if a man should cry down him that would praise and commend obedience to the king, and say, 'You must praise nothing but the king. So do these cry down our looking at, and re-

joicing in our love to Christ, and our thankfulness to him, and our obedience, and all under pretence of honouring him. Nay, they will not have us rejoice in one part of Christ's salvation (his saving us from the power of sin, and his sanctifying us) under pretence that we dishonour the other part of his salvation (his justifying us). If ever satan transformed himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of light, it is in the mistakes of the Antinomians; and no people in the world (except carnal libertines, whom this doctrine fits to a hair) are in more danger of them, than poor, doubting Christians, under trouble of conscience; especially if they be not judicious, and skilled in the doctrine of Christ. For the very pretence of extolling Christ and free grace, will take much with such; and any new way will sometimes seem to give them comfort, upon the very novelty and sudden change.

Having thus proved that you may, and must fetch your special comfort and assurance from evidences, and that your first evidence is your faith, I shall open this more fully under the next Direction.

Direct. XI. In the trial of your state, 'Be sure that you make use of infallible signs of sincerity, and take not those for certain which are not.'

And to that end remember what I said before, that you must well understand wherein the nature of saving faith, and so of all saving grace doth consist. And when you understand this, write it down in two or three lines; and both at your first trial, and afterward, whenever any doubts do drive you to a review of your evidence, still have recourse only to those signs, and try by them. What these signs are, I have shewed you so fully in the forecited place in my Book of Rest, that I shall say but little now. Remember that infallible signs are very few; and that whatsoever is made the condition of salvation, that is the most infallible evidence of our salvation, and therefore the fittest mark to try by; and therefore faith in God the Father and the Redeemer, is the main evidence. But because I have elsewhere shewed you, that this faith is comprehensive of love, gratitude, resolution to obey, and repentance, let me more particularly open it to help you in the trial. To prove any grace to be saving, it is necessary that you prove that salvation is fully promised to him that hath it. Now if you will

know what it is that hath this promise, I will tell you, 1. As to the object. 2. The act. 3. The degree or modification of the act. For all these three must be inquired after if you will get assurance. 1. The object is principally God, and the Redeemer Christ. And secondarily the benefits given by Christ; and under that, the means to attain the principal benefits, &c. 2. The act hath many names drawn from respective and moral differences in the object, as faith, desire, love, choosing, accepting, receiving, consenting, &c. But properly all are comprised in one word, 'willing.' The understanding's high estimation of God, and Christ, and grace, is a principal part of true saving grace; but yet it is difficult, and scarce possible to judge of yourself by it rightly, but only as it discovers itself by prevailing with the will. 3. The degree of this act must be such, as ordinarily prevaieth against its contrary; I mean, both the contrary object, and the contrary act to the same object. But because I doubt school-terms do obscure my meaning to you (though they are necessary for exactness), I will express the nature of saving grace in two or three marks as plain as I can.

1. Are you heartily willing to take God for your portion? And had you rather live with him in glory in his favour and fullest love, with a soul perfectly cleansed from all sin, and never more to offend him, rejoicing with his saints in his everlasting praises, than to enjoy the delights of the flesh on earth, in a way of sin and without the favour of God?

2. Are you heartily willing to take Jesus Christ as he is offered in the Gospel? that is, to be your only Saviour, and Lord, to give you pardon by his bloodshed, and to sanctify you by his word and Spirit, and to govern you by his laws?

(Because this general containeth and implieth several particulars, I will express them distinctly.)

Here it is supposed that you know this much following of the nature of his laws. For to be willing to be ruled by his laws in general, and utterly unwilling when it comes to particulars, is no true willingness or subjection. 1. You must know that his laws reach both to heart and outward actions. 2. That they command a holy, spiritual, heavenly life. 3. That they command things so cross and displeasing to the flesh, that the flesh will be still murmuring and striving against obedience. Particularly, 1. They command

things quite cross to the inclinations of the flesh; as to forgive wrongs, to love enemies, to forbear malice and revenge, to restrain and mortify lust and passion, to abhor and mortify pride, and be low in our own eyes, and humble and meek in spirit. 2. They command things that cross the interest of the flesh and its inclination both together; I mean which will deprive it of its enjoyments, and bring it to some suffering? As to perform duties even when they lay us open to disgrace and shame, and reproach in the world; and to deny our credit, rather than forsake Christ or our duty. To obey Christ in doing what he commandeth us, though it would hazard or certainly lose our wealth, friends, liberty and life itself; forsaking all rather than to forsake him; to give to the poor, and other good uses, and that liberally, according to our abilities. To deny the flesh all forbidden pleasures, and make no provisions to satisfy its lusts, but to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof; and in this combat to hold on to the end, and to overcome. These are the laws of Christ, which you must know, before you can determine whether you are indeed unfeignedly willing to obey them. Put therefore these further questions to yourself, for the trial of your willingness to be ruled by Christ according to his laws.

3. Are you heartily willing to live in the performance of those holy and spiritual duties of heart and life, which God hath absolutely commanded you? And are you heartily sorry that you perform them no better? With no more cheerfulness, delight, success, and constancy?

4. Are you so thoroughly convinced of the worth of everlasting happiness, and the intolerableness of everlasting misery, and the truth of both; and of the sovereignty of God the Father, and Christ the Redeemer, and your many engagements to him; and of the necessity and good of obeying, and the evil of sinning, that you are truly willing; that is, have a settled resolution to cleave to Christ, and obey him in the dearest, most disgraceful, painful, hazardous, flesh-displeasing duties; even though it should cost you the loss of all your worldly enjoyments, and your life?

5. Doth this willingness or resolution already so far prevail in your heart and life, against all the interest and temptations of the world, the devil, and your flesh, that you do

ordinarily practise the most strict and holy, the most self-denying, costly, and hazardous duties that you know God requireth of you, and do heartily strive against all known sin, and overcome all gross sins; and when you fall under any prevailing temptation, do rise again by repentance, and begging pardon of God, through the blood of Christ, do resolve to watch and resist more carefully for the time to come?

In these five marks is expressed the Gospel-description of a true Christian.

Having laid down these marks, I must needs add a few words for the explaining of some things in them, lest you mistake the meaning, and so lose the benefit of them.

1. Observe that it is your willingness, which is the very point to be tried. And therefore, 1. Judge not by your bare knowledge. 2. Judge not by the stirring or passionate workings of your affections. I pray you forget not this rule in any of your self-examinings. It is the heart that God requireth. "My son, give me thy heart;" Prov. xxiii. 26. If he hath the will, he hath the heart. He may have much of our knowledge, and not our heart. But when we know him so thoroughly as to will him unfeignedly, then he hath our heart. Affectionate workings of the soul to God in Christ, are sweet things, and high and noble duties and such as all Christians should strive for. But they are not the safest marks to try our states by. 1. Because there may be a solid, sincere intention and choice in and of the will, where there is little stirring perceived in the affections. 2. Because the will is the master-commanding faculty of the rational soul; and so if it be right, that man is upright and safe. 3. Because the passions and affections are so mutable and uncertain. The will can command them but imperfectly; it cannot perfectly restrain them from vanities; much less can it perfectly raise them to that height, as is suitable to the excellency of our heavenly objects. But the object itself, with its sensible manner of apprehension, moves them more than all the command of the will. And so we find by experience, that a godly man, when with his utmost private endeavour, he cannot command one stirring pang of divine love or joy in his soul, yet upon the hearing of some moving sermon, or the sudden receiving of some extraordinary mer-

cy, or the reading of some quickening book, he shall feel perhaps some stirring of that affection. So when we cannot weep in private one tear for sin, yet at a stirring sermon, or when we give vent to our sorrows, and ease our troubled hearts into the bosom of some faithful friend, then we can find tears. 4. Because passions and affections depend so much on the temperature of the body. To one they are easy, familiar, and at command; to another (as honest) they are difficult and scarce stirred at all. With most women, and persons of weaker tempers, they are easier than with men. Some cannot weep at the death of a friend, though never so dear, no, nor perhaps feel very sensible, inward grief; and yet perhaps would have redeemed his life at a far dearer rate (had it been possible) than those that can grieve and weep more abundantly. 5. Because worldly things have so great an advantage on our passions and affections. 1. They are sensible and near us, and our knowledge of them is clear. But God is not to be seen, heard, or felt by our senses, he is far from us, though locally present with us; we are capable of knowing but little, very little of him. 2. Earthly things are always before our eyes, their advantage is continual. 3. Earthly things being still the objects of our senses, do force our passions, whether we will or not, though they cannot force our wills. 6. Because affections and passions rise and fall, and neither are nor can be in any even and constant frame, and therefore are unfit to be the constant or certain evidence of our state; but the will's resolution, and choice may be more constant. So that I advise you rather to try yourself by your will, than by your passionate stirrings of love or longing, of joy or sorrow.

Object. 'But doth not the Scripture lay as much on love, as on any grace? And doth not Christ say, That except we love him above all, we cannot be his disciples?'

Answ. It is all very true. But consider, love hath two parts; the one in the will, which is commonly called a faculty of the soul, as rational; and this is the same thing that I call willing, accepting, choosing, or consenting. This complacency is true love to Christ; and this is the sure, standing mark. The other is the passionate part, commonly said to be in the soul, as sensitive; and this, though most commonly called love, yet is less certain and

constant, and so unfitter to try your state by though a great duty, so far as we can reach it.

2. You must understand and well remember, that it is not every willingness that will prove your sincerity: for wicked men may have slight apprehensions of spiritual things, which may produce some slight desires and wishes which yet are so feeble and heartless, that every lust and carnal desire overcomes them; and it will not so much as enable them to deny the grossest sin. But it must be the prevalent part of your will that God must have. I mean a great share, a deeper and larger room than any thing in the world; that is, you must have a higher estimation of God, and everlasting happiness, and Christ, and a holy life, than of any thing in the world; and also your will must be so disposed hereby, and inclined to God, that if God and glory, to be obtained through Christ by a holy, self-denying life, were set before you on the one hand, and the pleasure, profits, and honours of the world to be enjoyed in a way of sin, on the other hand, you would resolvedly take the former, and refuse the latter. Indeed they are thus set before you, and upon your choice dependeth your salvation or damnation, though that choice must come from the grace of God.

3. Yet must you well remember, that this willingness and choice is still imperfect, and therefore when I mention a hearty willingness, I mean not a perfect willingness. There may be, and is in the most gracious souls on earth, much indisposedness, backwardness, and withdrawing of heart, which is too great a measure of unwillingness to duty; especially to those duties which the flesh is most averse from, and which require most of God and his Spirit to the right performance of them.

Among all duties, I think the soul is naturally most backward to these following. 1. To secret prayer, because it is spiritual, and requires great reverence, and hath nothing of external pomp or form to take us up with, and consisteth not much in the exercise of common gifts, but in the exercise of special grace, and the breathings of the Spirit, and searchings, pantings, and strivings, of a gracious soul towards God. (I do not speak of the heartless repeating of bare words, learned by rote, and either not understood, or not uttered from the feeling of the soul.) 2. To serious

meditation also is the soul very backward ; that is, either to meditate on God, and the promised glory, or any spiritual subject, to this end that the heart may be thereby quickened and raised, and graces exercised (though to meditate on the same subject, only to know or dispute on it, the heart is nothing near so backward). Or else to meditate on the state of our own hearts, by way of self-examination, or self-judging, or self-reprehension, or self-exciting. 3. Also to the duty of faithful dealing with each other's souls, in secret reproof and exhortation, plainly (though lovingly) to tell each other of our sins and danger, to this the heart is usually very backward ; partly through a sinful bashfulness, partly for want of more believing, lively apprehensions of our duty, and our brother's danger, and partly because we are loath to displease men and lose their favour, it being grown so common for men to fall out with those (if not hate them) that deal plainly and faithfully with them. 4. Also to take a reproof, as well as to give it, the heart is very backward. Even godly men, through the sad remainders of their sinfulness, do too commonly frown, and snarl, and retort our reproofs, and study presently how to excuse themselves, and put it by, or how to charge us with something that may stop our mouths, and make the reprover seem as bad as themselves. Though they dare not tread our reproofs under feet, and turn again, and all to rent us, yet they oft shew the remnants of a dogged nature, though when they review their ways it costs them sorrow. We must sugar and butter our words, and make them liker to stroking than striking, liker an approving than a reproving them, liker a flattery than faithful dealing, and yet when we have all done, they go down very hardly, and that but half way, even with many godly people when they are under a temptation. 5. The like may be said of all those duties which do pinch upon our credit or profit, or tend to disgrace us, or impoverish us in the world ; as the confessing of a disgraceful fault ; the free giving to the poor or sacred uses, according to our estates ; the parting with our own right or gain for peace ; the patient suffering of wrong, and forgiving it heartily, and loving bitter, abusive enemies, especially the running upon the stream of men's displeasure, and incurring the danger of being utterly undone in our worldly state (especially if men be rich, who do therefore as hardly get to heaven as a

camel through a needle's eye). And above all, the laying down of our lives for Christ. It cannot be expected, that godly men should perform all these with perfect willingness; the flesh will play its part, in pleading its own cause, and will strive hard to maintain its own interests. O the shifts, the subtle arguments, or at least the clamorous and importunate contradictions that all these duties will meet with in the best, so far as they are renewed, and their graces weak! So that you may well hence conclude that you are a sinner, but you may not conclude that you are graceless, because of a backwardness, and some unwillingness to duty.

Yet your willingness must be greater than your unwillingness, and so Christ must have the prevailing part of your will; and from that the denomination is usually taken. So that Scripture useth to affirm God's people to be willing even when they fail in the execution. So Paul (Rom. vii. 18.) saith, "To will is present with me, when how to do or perform he found not;" that is, not to obey so perfectly as he would do; not to love God so intensely and fervently; not to subdue passions and lusts so thoroughly; not to watch our thoughts, and words, and ways so narrowly, and order them so exactly, as the bent of his will did consent to. And lest any Arminian should pretend (as they do) that Paul speaks here in the person of an unregenerate man, as under the convictions of the law, and not as a man regenerate; it is plain in the text that he speaks of himself in the state which he was then in, and that state was a regenerate state. He expressly saith, it is thus, and thus with me; "So then I myself with my mind do serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin;" ver. 25. And to put it out of doubt, the apostle speaks the like of all Christians, Gal. v. 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This is the plain exposition of Rom. vii. Here Scripture maketh the godly willing to do more than they do or can do, but yet it is not a perfect willingness, but it is the prevailing inclination and choice of the will, and that gives the name.

4. Observe further, that I add your actual performance of duty; because true hearty willingness will shew itself in actions and endeavours. It is but dissembling, if I should say I am willing to perform the strictest, holiest duties, and

yet do not perform them. To say I am willing to pray, and pray not; or to give to the poor, and yet give not; or to perform the most self-denying costly duties, and yet when it should come to the practice, I will not be persuaded or drawn to them. I will not confess a disgraceful sin, nor further a good cause to my danger, cost or trouble; nor reprove, nor submit to reproof, nor turn from the way of temptations or the like. Action must discover true willingness. The son that said to his father, "I go, Sir," but went not to labour in the vineyard, was not accepted or justified. If therefore you are in doubt whether your willingness be sincere, inquire into your practice, and performance. God commandeth you to pray, to instruct your family, to be merciful to the poor, to forgive those that wrong you, &c. The flesh and the devil persuade you from these. Do you perform them, or do you not? Though you may do it with backwardness and dulness, and weakness, yet do you do it? And desire you could do it better, and lament your misdoing it? And endeavour to do it better than you have formerly done? This shews then that the Spirit prevaieth, though the flesh do contradict it.

5. Yet here you must carefully distinguish of duties; for God hath made some to be secondary parts of the condition of the covenant, and so of flat necessity for the continuance or our justification, and for the attaining of glorification. Such are confessing Christ before men when we are called to it; confessing sin, praying, shewing mercy to the poor, forgiving wrongs, hearing and yielding to God's word, &c. still supposing that there be opportunity and necessities for the performance of these. But some duties there are that God hath not laid so great a stress or necessity on, though yet the wilful resolved omission in ordinary, of any known duty, is contrary to the nature of true obedience.

Also, the case may much differ with several persons, places and seasons, concerning duty; that may be a duty to one man, that is not to another; and at one place which is not at another, and at one season, which is not at another. And that may be a greater duty, and of indispensable necessity to one, which to another is not so great. It may stand with true grace, to omit that duty which men know not to be a duty, or not to be so to them (except where the duty is such, as is itself of absolute necessity to salvation);

but it cannot so stand with grace in those that know it, ordinarily to reject it.

6. Also you must understand, that when I say, that true willingness to be ruled by Christ, will shew itself in actual obedience; I do not mean it of every particular individual act which is our duty, as if you should judge yourself graceless for every particular omission of a duty; no, though you knew it to be a duty; and though you considered it to be a duty. For, 1. There may be a true habituated inclination and willingness to obey Christ rooted in the heart, when yet by the force of a temptation, the actual prevalency of it at that time, in that act, may be hindered and suppressed. 2. And at the same time, you do hold on in a course of obedience in other duties. 3. And when the temptation is overcome, and grace hath been roused up against the flesh, and you soberly recollect your thoughts, you will return to obedience in that duty also. Yea, how many days, or weeks, or months, a true Christian may possibly neglect a known duty, I will not dare to determine, (of which more anon). Yet such omissions as will not stand with a sincere resolution and willingness to obey Christ universally (I mean an habitual willingness) will not consist with the truth of grace.

7. I know the fourth mark, about forsaking all for Christ, may seem somewhat unseasonable and harsh to propound for the quieting of a troubled conscience. But yet, I durst not omit it, seeing Christ hath not omitted it; nay, seeing he hath so urged it, and laid such a stress on it in the Scripture as he hath done, I dare not daub, nor be unfaithful, for fear of troubling. Such skinning over the wound will but prepare for more trouble and a further cure. Christ thought it meet even to tell young beginners of the worst, (though it might possibly discourage them, and did turn some back) that they might not come to him upon mistaken expectations, and he requireth all that will be Christians, and be saved, to count their cost beforehand, and reckon what it will stand them in to be Christ's disciples; and if they cannot undergo his terms (that is, to deny themselves, take up their cross, forsake all and follow him) they cannot be his disciples. And Christ had rather they knew it beforehand, than to deceive themselves, or to turn back when they meet with what they never thought of, and then to

imagine that Christ had deceived them, and drawn them in, and done the wrong.

8. When I say in the fourth mark, that you must have a settled resolution, I mean the same thing as before I did by hearty willingness. But it is meeter here to call it resolution, because this is the proper name for that act of the will, which is a determination of itself upon deliberation, after any wavering, to the doing or submitting to any thing as commanded. I told you it must be the prevailing act of the will that must prove you sincere: every cold ineffectual wish will not serve turn. Christ seeks for your heart on one side, and the world with its pleasures, profits, and honours on the other side. The soul, which upon consideration of both, doth prefer Christ in his choice, and reject the world (as it is competitor with him) and this not doubtingly and with reservation for further deliberation or trial, but presently passeth his consent for better and worse, this is said to be a resolving. And I know no one word that more fitly expresseth the nature of that grace which differenceth a true Christian from all hypocrites, and by which a man may safely judge of his estate.

9. Yet I here add, that it must be a settled resolution; and that to intimate, that it must be an habitual willingness or resolution. The prevalency of Christ's interest in the soul must be an habitual prevalency. If a man that is terrified by a rousing sermon, or that lieth in expectation of present death, should actually resolve to forsake sin, or perform duty, without any further change of mind, or habit, or fixedness of this resolution, it would be of no great value, and soon extinguished. Though yet I believe that no unsanctified man doth ever attain to that full resolution for Christ, which hath a complacency in Christ accompanying it, and which may be termed the prevailing part of the will. Those that seem resolved to day to be for Christ, and to deny the world and the flesh, and the next day are unresolved again, have cause to suspect that they were never truly resolved. Though the will of a godly man may lie under declinings in the degrees of resolution, yet Christ hath always his habitual resolutions, and usually his actual in a prevalent degree.

10. I add also the grounds (in the fourth mark) on which this resolution must be raised. For false grounds in the

understanding will not bear up a true resolution in the will. And therefore we put the articles of our creed before our profession of consent and obedience. Sound doctrine and sound belief of it breeds a sound resolution, and makes a sound heart and life. If a man resolve to obey Christ, upon a conceit that Christ will never put him upon any suffering (else he would not resolve it) and that he will give him such brutish pleasures when he is dead, as Mahomet hath promised to his disciples, this resolution were not sound, yet in many lesser points of doctrine a true Christian may be unsound, and yet soundly cleave to the foundation. He may build hay and stubble possibly ; but the foundation must be held.

11. Observe well (lest you mistake me) that I speak only of the necessity of your present resolving to forsake all for Christ, if he call you to it; but I speak not of your absolute promise or prediction, that eventually you shall not deny or forsake him. You may be uncertain how you shall be upheld in a day of trial, and yet you may now be resolved or fully purposed in your own mind what to do. To say, 'I will not consent, purpose or resolve, unless I were certain to perform my resolutions, and not to flag or change again;' this is but to say, I will be no Christian, unless I were sure to persevere. I will not be married to Christ, lest I should be drawn to break my covenant with him.

12. Also observe, that when I speak of your resolving to forsake all for Christ, it is not to cast away your state or life, but to submit it to his dispose, and to relinquish it only in case that he command you so.

13. And I do not intend that you should be able thus to resolve of yourself without the special grace of God ; nor yet without it to continue those resolutions, much less to perform them by actual suffering.

Object. 'But I cannot be sure that God will give me grace to persevere, or at least not to deny him, as Peter did ; and therefore I should neither promise nor resolve what I cannot be certain to perform.'

Ans. 1. I suppose you have read the many Scriptures and arguments which our divines ordinarily use to prove that the true believers shall not fall quite away. And I know not how the opposers can answer that text which themselves use to allege for the contrary ; Matt. xiii. 6. 21.

Those that believe for a time, and in the time of persecution fall away, it is because the seed had not depth of earth, the word never took rooting in their hearts. Whence it seems that it may be well inferred, that those shall not fall away in time of temptation, in whom the word of God hath taken deep rooting. And that is, in them in whose hearts or wills Christ hath a stronger interest than the creature, or those that have a well-grounded, unreserved, habituated or settled resolution to be for Christ. 2. However, your present resolution, and your covenanting with Christ, is no more but this ; to say, 'I do consent ;' or 'This I am resolved to do, by the help of God's grace.' 3. Else no man should be baptized or become a Christian, because he is uncertain to keep his covenants : for all that are baptized, do covenant and vow, " to forsake the world, flesh, devil, " and fight under Christ's banner to their lives' end. Understand me therefore, that you are not to promise to do this by your own strength, but by the strength of Christ, as knowing that he hath promised his Spirit and grace for the aid of every true believer.

14. If your resolution at present be hearty, you ought not to vex and disquiet your mind, with doubtful tormenting fears what you should do, if you be put to it to forsake all, and suffer death for Christ, for he hath promised to lay no more on us than we can bear, but with the temptation will make us a way to come forth ; 1 Cor. x. 13. either he will not bring us into trials beyond our strength ; or else he will increase our strength according to our trials. He hath bid us pray, " Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : " and he hath promised, that " whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ according to his will, he will give us. " So that if once you can but truly say, that it is your full resolution to forsake all for Christ if he call you to it, and that on the forementioned grounds, you ought not then to vex your soul with fears of the issue ; for that is but to distrust God your Father and your strength. Only you must be careful to do your duty to the keeping up of your present resolutions, and to wait obediently on God for the help of his Spirit, and to beg it earnestly at his hands.

15. Much less is it lawful for men to feign and suppose such calamities to themselves, as God doth never try men by, and then to ask themselves, ' Can I bear these for Christ ? '

And so to try themselves on false and dangerous grounds. Some use to be troubled, lest if they were put to long and exquisite torments for Christ, they should renounce him. One saith, 'I cannot endure the torments of hell for Christ;' another saith, 'Could I endure to be roasted, or torn in pieces so many weeks or days together?' Or 'Could I endure to die so many times over?' These are foolish, sinful questions, which Christ never desired you to put to yourselves. He never tries men's faith on this manner. Tormentors cannot go beyond his will. Nay, it is but very few he tries by death, and fewer by an extreme tormenting death. All this therefore proceeds from error.

16. Observe from the fifth mark, that the present prevalence of your resolutions now against those temptations which you encounter with, may well encourage you to expect that they should prevail hereafter, if God bring you into greater trials. Can you now follow Christ in a holy life, though your flesh repine, and would have its liberties and pleasures; and though the world deride or threaten you, or great ones turn against you and threaten your undoing? Can you part with your money to the poor, or to the promoting of any work of Christ, according to the measure of estate that God hath allotted you, notwithstanding all temptations to the contrary? Some trials you have now; if you can go well through these, you have no cause to disquiet your mind with fears of falling in greater trials. But he that cannot now deny his greedy appetite in meats and drink, so far as to forbear excess: nor can deny his credit with men, nor bear the scorns or frowns of the world, but be on the stronger side, and decline his duty to avoid danger, whatever become of conscience or God's favour, this man is not like to forsake and lay down his life for Christ and his cause.

Object 'But though I break through lesser trials, I am not sure to overcome in greater, for the same measure of grace will not enable a man to forsake all, which will enable him to forsake a little. Many have gone through smaller trials, and after forsake Christ in greater. And Christ makes it the property of temporaries that are not rooted in the faith, that they fall when tribulation and persecution for the Gospel ariseth, and therefore it seems they may stand till

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then ; and if trial never come, they may never fall, and yet be unsound in the mean time.'

Answ. 1. If your trial now be considerable, the truth of grace may be manifested in it, though it be none of the greatest, and though in striving against sin you have not yet resisted unto blood. 2. If you carefully observe your own heart, you may discern whether the Spirit and your resolutions be prevalent, by their daily subduing and mortifying the flesh and its lusts. Nay, let me tell you, the victory of God's Spirit over the flattering, enticing world in prosperity, is as great and glorious, if not more, than that over the frowning, persecuting world in adversity. And therefore find the one, and you need not fear the other. Though I confess that hypocrites do not fall so visibly and shamefully always in prosperity as in adversity ; for they have more pretences, advantages, and carnal shifts, to hide the shame of their falls. And for that in the parable in Matt. xiii. I pray you mark one thing. Christ seems to speak of every several sort of hearers by a gradation, speaking last of those that go farthest. The first sort are the common, ignorant, negligent hearers, in whom the word takes no root at all. The second sort are those that give it a slight and shallow rooting, but no deep rooting at all ; these are they that fall away in tribulation. By falling away, is meant the plain deserting Christ or the substance of his cause. These men till this falling away, though they professed Christ, and heard the word with joy, yet no doubt did not crucify the flesh and the world, whereby they might have discovered their unsoundness if they would, before tribulation came. First, by discerning that the word was not deep rooted : 1. In their judgment and estimation. 2. Or in their wills and settled resolution. Secondly ; And by discerning the unmortified lusts of their hearts in the mean time. But it seems the third sort of hearers, likened to the thorny ground, went further than these ; for here it is only said by Luke, viii. 14. " That they bring no fruit to perfection." However, whether these went farther than the other, or not, it is certain that these also had their trial, and fell in the trial. The deceitfulness of riches overturned these, as the heat of persecution overturned the other. So that it is evident that prosperity puts faith to the trial, as well as ad-

versity. But mark the different manner of their falls and overthrows. They that are overthrown by adversity, are said to fall away, that is, to forsake Christ openly; but they that fall by prosperity, are not said to fall away; but only that the "deceitfulness of riches, and cares of the world, choke the word, so that it becomes unfruitful;" that is, brings no fruit to perfection. For usually these do not openly forsake Christ, but continue oft an unfruitful and hypocritical profession; insomuch that at that very time, when the word is choked and fruitless, yet the blade of profession may be as green as ever, and they may be so much in some duties, and have such golden words, and witty shifts to plead for every covetous practice, and put so fair a gloss on all their actions, that they may keep up the credit of being very eminent Christians. So that if your grace can carry you well through prosperity, you may be confident of the truth of it. 3. And then if it be thus proved true and saving, you have cause to be confident that it will hold out in adversity also, and cause you to overcome the shake of tribulation. I think most men are better in adversity than in prosperity, though I confess no adversity is so shaking, as that which leaves it in a man's choice to come out of it by sinning. As for a man in health to be persecuted, and the persecutor to say, 'If thou wilt turn to my side and way, I will give thee thy life and preferment with it;' but sickness or other sufferings imposed only by God, and which only God can take off, are nothing so shaking. For as the former draws us to please men, that they may deliver us, so this draws even the wicked to think of pleasing God, that he may deliver them.

17. Observe that when I ask 'whether this resolution do already prevail,' I do not mean any perfect prevailing; nay, sin may prevail to draw you to a particular act (and how many, I will not undertake to tell you) and yet still grace and the Spirit do conquer in the main. For you will say, that general and army get the victory who vanquish the other, and win the field, though yet perhaps a troop or regiment may be routed, and many slain.

18. When I speak of your 'overcoming all gross sins,' as I mean in ordinary, not doubting but it is too possible for a believer to commit a gross sin; so I confess that it is hard to tell just which sins are to be called gross, and which

infirmities only ; or (as some speak) which are mortal, and which not. And therefore this mark hath some difficulties, as to the right trying of it (of which more anon).

19. Yet I desire that you join them all together in trial, seeing it is in the whole that the true and full description of a Christian is contained. The same description of a true Christian (presupposing his right belief) I have drawn up in our public church profession, which in this county, the ministers have agreed on ; in the profession of consent in these words ; ‘ I do heartily take this one God for my only God and chief good ; and this Jesus Christ for my only Lord, Redeemer and Saviour ; and this Holy Ghost for my Sanctifier ; and the doctrine by him revealed and sealed by his miracles, and now contained in the Holy Scriptures, do I take for the law of God, and the rule of my faith and life : and repenting unfeignedly of my sins, I do resolve through the grace of God sincerely to obey him, both in holiness to God, and righteousness to man, and in special love to the saints, and communion with them, against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and my own flesh, and this to the death.’ He that sincerely can speak these words, is a sincere Christian.

20. Lastly, that you may see that those five which I laid you down are all true marks, do but peruse these texts of Scripture following. For the first, Psalm xvi. 5. 2. lxxiii. 24—28. iv. 6, 7. i. 1—3. Josh. xxiv. 16—18. 21—24. Matt. vi. 19—21. Rom. vii. 24. viii. 17, 18. 23. Heb. xi. 10. 15, 16. 25—27. Psalm xvi. 5—8. For the second, see John i. 10—12. iii. 16. Mark xvi. 16. Acts xvi. 31. John xiv. 21. xvi. 27. Rom. xiv. 9. Luke xvi. 27. James i. 12. Matt. xxii. 37. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Matt. x. 37. Rev. xxii. 14. Heb. v. 9. For the third, most of the same will serve, and Heb. xii. 14. Matt. vii. 24. Psalm i. 2, 3. Matt. v. 20. Acts x. 35. Rom. vii. 22. For the two last besides the former, see Heb. xi. 6. Rom. viii. 1—14. Gal. v. 17. 24. vi. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Luke viii. 13. 1 John ii. 15. v. 4, 5. James i. 27. iv. 4. Gal. vi. 14. i. 4. Rom. xii. 2. Titus ii. 14. Matt. x. 37. Rom. ii. 5—7. Rev. xiv. 13. Phil. ii. 14. Col. iii. 23, 24. 1 Cor. iii. 8. 14. John xii. 16. 1 John iii. 22, 23. Gen. xxii. 16. Matt. x. 22. xxiv. 13. Heb. iii. 6. 14. vi. 11. Rev. ii. 26. 10. xii. 11.

Matt. xvi. 25. x. 39. Mark xvii. 33. Rom. viii. 9. 13. Luke xiii. 3. 5. Rom. vi. 4—6. 12. 14. 16, 17. 22.

And thus I have given you such marks as you may safely try yourself by, and cleared the meaning of them to you. Now let me advise you to this use of them. 1. In your serious self-examination, try only by these, and not by any uncertain marks. I know there be promises of life made to some particular duties and single qualifications in Scripture, as to humility, meekness, alms-deeds, love to the godly, &c. ; but it is still both on supposition that they be not single in the person, but are accompanied with, and flow from that faith and love to God before-mentioned ; and also that they are in a prevailing degree.

2. Whenever any fresh doubtings arise in you upon the stirrings of corruption, or debility of graces, still have recourse to these former marks ; and while you find these, let not any thing cause you to pass wrong judgments on yourself. Lay these now to your own heart, and tell me, ' Are you not unfeignedly willing to have Christ on the terms that he is offered ? Are you not willing to be more holy ? And beg of him to make you so ? Would you not be glad if your soul were more perfectly sanctified, and rid of that body of sin, though it were to the smart and displeasing of your flesh ? Are you not willing to wait on God, in the use of his ordinances, in that poor weak measure as you are able to perform them ? Durst you, or would you quit your part in God, heaven, Christ, and forsake the way of holiness, and do as the profane world doth, though it were to please your flesh, or save your state or life ? Do you not daily strive against the flesh and keep it under, and deny its desires ? Do you not deny the world when it would hinder you from works of mercy or public good, according to your ability ? Is it not the grief of your soul when you fall, and your greatest trouble that you cannot walk more obediently, innocently and fruitfully ? And do you not after sinning resolve to be more watchful for the time to come ? Are you not resolved to stick to Christ and his holy laws and ways, whatever changes or dangers come, and rather to forsake friends and all that you have, than to forsake him ? Yet in a godly jealousy and distrust of your own heart, do renounce your own strength, and resolve to do this only in the strength of Christ, and therefore daily beg it of him ? Is it not your daily care

and business to please God and do his will, and avoid sinning in you weak measure?' I hope that all this is so, and your own case; which, if it be, you have infallible evidences, and want but the sight and comfort of them, you have the true grounds for assurance, though you want assurance itself; your chief danger is over, though your trouble remain. Your soul is at the present in a safe condition, though not in the sense of it. You are in the state of salvation, though not of consolation. It must be your next work therefore to study God's mercies, and take notice what he hath done for your soul. Let not so blessed a guest as the Holy Ghost dwell in you unobserved. Shall he do such wonders in you, and for you, and you not know it, or acknowledge it? Shall he new-beget you, and new-make you, and produce a spiritual and heavenly nature in you, who of yourself were so carnal and earthly, and will you not observe it? Had you any of these holy desires, endeavours, or resolutions of yourself by nature? Or have the ungodly about you any of them? O that you knew what a work of wonderful mercy, wisdom and power, the Spirit performeth in the renewing of a soul; then sure you would more observe and admire his love to you herein!

Direct. XII. The next rule for your direction for the right settling of your peace is this. 'You must know, that assurance of justification, adoption, and right of salvation, cannot be gathered from the smallest degree of saving grace.'

1. Here I must say something for explaining my meaning to you. 2. And then give you my reasons of this assertion.

1. Understand that I speak of God's ordinary working by means, not denying but God may, by a voice from heaven, or an angel, or other supernatural revelation, bestow assurance on whom he pleaseth. But I hope all wise Christians will take heed of expecting this, or of trusting too much to seeming revelations, unless they could prove that God useth to confer assurance in this way; which I think they cannot.

2. By the smallest degree of grace, I mean, of faith, love, obedience, and those saving graces, whose acts are the condition of our salvation, and which in the fore-expressed marks I laid down to you. Do not therefore so mistake me,

as to think that I speak of a small measure of those common gifts which are separable from true sanctification; such as are extensive knowledge, memory, ability of utterance in preaching, repeating, exhorting or praying; an ornate, plausible winning deportment before men, such as is commonly called good breeding or manners; an affected, humble, complimentary familiarity and condescension, to creep into men's estimation and affections, and steal their hearts, &c. Many a one that is strong in saving grace, is weak in all these, and other the like.

Now for my reasons.

1. I conceive that it is not possible for any minister punctually to set down a discernible difference between the least measure of true saving grace, and the highest degree of common grace; and to say, just here it is that they part, or by this you may discern them. I do but say, I think so, because other men may know far more than I do; but I will say it as certain, that I am not able to do it, for my own part. This much I can tell, that the least degree of grace that is saving, doth determine the soul for God and Christ, against the world and flesh, that stand as competitors; and so where Christ's interest prevaieth in the least measure, there is the least measure of saving grace. As when you are weighing two things in the balance, and at last make it so near even weight, that one end is turned and no more: so when you are considering whether to be for Christ, or for the flesh and the world, and your will is but even a very little determined to Christ, and preferreth him; this is the least measure of saving grace. But then how a poor soul should discern this prevalent choice and determination of itself is all the question. For there is nothing more easy and common than for men to think verily, that they prefer Christ above the creature, as long as no temptation doth assault them, nor sensual objects stand up in any considerable strength to entice them. Nay, wicked men do truly, oftentimes, purpose to obey Christ before the flesh, and to take him for their Lord, merely in the general, when they do not know or consider the quality of his laws; that they are so strict and spiritual, and contrary to the flesh, and hazardous to their worldly hopes and seeming happiness. But when it comes to particulars, and God saith, 'Now deny thyself, and thy friend, and thy goods, and thy life for my sake;'

alas, it was never his resolution to do it; nor will he be persuaded to it. But he that said to God, who sends him to labour in his vineyard, "I go, Sir," when he comes to find the unpleasingness of the work, he goes not, nor ever sets a hand to it. So that it is evident, that it is no true, saving resolution or willingness, which prevaieth not for actual obedience. Now here comes in the unresolvable doubt, What is the least measure of obedience, that will prove a man truly willing and resolved, or to have truly accepted of Christ for his Lord? This obedience lieth in performing what is commanded, and avoiding what is forbidden. Now it is too certain, that every true believer is guilty of a frequent neglect of duty, yea, of known duty. We know we should love God more abundantly, and delight in him, and meditate more on him, and pray more oft and earnestly than we do, and instruct our families more diligently, and speak against sin more boldly, and admonish our neighbours more faithfully, with many the like. "The good that we would do, we do not;" Rom. vii. 19. Nay, the flesh so striveth against the Spirit, that "we cannot do the good we would;" Gal. v. 17. Nay, many a true Christian in time of temptation, hath been drawn to omit secret prayer, or family duties, almost wholly for a certain space of time; yea, and perhaps to be so corrupted in his judgment for a time, as to think he doth well in it, as also in forbearing praising God by psalms, receiving the sacraments, and communicating with the church, hearing the word publicly, &c. (for what duty almost is not denied of late?) and perhaps may not only omit relieving the poor for a time, but excuse it. Now what man can punctually determine just how often a true Christian may be guilty of any such omission? and just how long he may continue it? and what the duties be which he may possibly so omit, and what not?

So also in sins of commission. Alas, what sins did Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, Asa, Peter, &c. commit!

If we should say as the Papists and Arminians, that these being mortal sins, do for the time, till repentance restore him, cast a true Christian out of God's favour into a state of damnation; then what man breathing is able to enumerate those mortal sins, and tell us which be so damning, and which not? Nay, if he could say, drunkenness is one, and gluttony another, who can set the punctual stint,

and say, 'Just so many bits a man must eat before he be a glutton; or just so much he must drink before he be a drunkard? or by such a sign the turning point may be certainly known?' We may have signs by which we may be tried at the bar of man; but these are none of them taken from that smallest degree, which specifieth and denominates the sin before God. If we avoid the foresaid opinion that one such sin doth bring us into the state of damnation, yet is the difficulty never the less; for it is certain, that "he that commits sin is of the devil;" 1 John iii. 8. and there are spots, which are not the spots of God's children; and all true faith will mortify the world to us, and us to it, (Gal. vi. 14.), and "he that is in Christ hath crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof," (chap. v. 24.); and that "if we live after the flesh we shall die;" Rom. viii. 13. And "his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness;" chap. vi. 16. And "if we delight in iniquity, or regard it, God will not hear our prayers;" Psal. lxvi. 18. And that "he that nameth the name of Christ must depart from iniquity;" 1 Tim. ii. 19. And that "God will judge all men according to their works," and bid the workers of iniquity depart from him; Matt. vii. 23. Now can any man on earth tell us just how great, or how often sinning will stand with true grace, and how much will not? Who can find those punctual bounds in the word of God? I conclude, therefore, that no minister, or at least, none who is no wiser than I am, can give a true, discernible difference between the worst of saints, and the best of the unsanctified, or the weakest degree of true grace, and the highest of common grace; and so to help such weak Christians to true assurance of their salvation.

2. But as this is impossible to be declared by the teachers, so much more is it impossible to be discerned by the persons themselves, yea, though it could possibly be declared to him; and that for these reasons.

1. From the nature of the thing. Small things are hardly discerned. A little is next to none. 2. From the great darkness of man's understanding, and his unacquaintedness with himself (both the nature, faculties, and motions of his soul, naturally considered, and the moral state, dispositions, and motions of it), and is it likely that so blind an

eye can discern the smallest thing, and that in so strange and dark a place? Every purblind man cannot see an atom, or a pin, especially in the dark. 3. The heart is deceitful above all things, as well as dark; full of seemings, counterfeits, and false pretences. And a child in grace is not able to discover its jugglings, and understand a book, where almost every word is equivocal or mysterious. 4. The heart is most confused, as well as dark and deceitful; it is like a house, or shop of tools, where all things are thrown together on a heap, and nothing keeps its own place. There are such multiplicity of cogitations, fancies, and passions, and such irregular thronging in of them, and such a confused reception, and operation of objects and conceptions, that it is a wonderful difficult thing for the best Christian to discern clearly the bent and actions, and so the state of his own soul. For in such a crowd of cogitations and passions, we are like men in a fair or crowd of people, where a confused noise may be heard, but you cannot well perceive what any of them say, except either some one near you that speaks much louder than all the rest, or else except you single out some one from the rest, and go close to him to confer with him of purpose. Our intellect and passions are like the lakes of water in the common roads, where the frequent passage of horses doth so muddy it, that you can see nothing in it, especially that it is near the bottom; when in pure untroubled waters you may see a small thing. In such a confusion and tumult as is usually in men's souls, for a poor weak Christian to seek for the discovery of his sincerity, is according to the proverb, to seek for a needle in a bottle of hay. 5. Besides all this, the corrupt heart of man is so exceeding backward to the work of self-examination, and the use of other means, by which the soul should be familiarly acquainted with itself, that in a case of such difficulty it will hardly ever overcome them, if it were a thing that might be done. In the best, a great deal of resolvedness, diligence, and unwearied constancy in searching into the state of the soul, is necessary to the attainment of a settled assurance and peace. How much more in them that have so small, and almost undiscernible a measure of grace to discover. 6. Yet further, the conceptions, apprehensions, and consequently the sensible motions of the will, and especially the passions, are all naturally

exceeding mutable ; and while the mobile, agile spirits are any way the instruments, it will be so ; especially where the impression which is made in the understanding is so small and weak. Naturally man's mind and will is exceeding mutable, and turned into a hundred shapes in a few days, according as objects are presented to us, and the temperature of the body disposeth, helps, or hinders the mind. Let us hear one man reason the case, and we think he makes all as clear as the light ; let us hear another solve all his arguments, and dispute for the contrary, and then we see that our apprehensions were abused. Let us hear him reply and confute all again, and confirm his cause, and then we think him in the right again. Nothing more changeable than the conceivings and mind of man, till he be thoroughly resolved and habituated. Now in this case, how shall those that have but little grace, be able to discern it ? It will not keep the mind from fluctuating. If they seem resolved for obedience to Christ to-day, to-morrow they are so shaken by some enticing object, and force of the same temptation, that their resolution is undiscernible ; nay, actually they prefer sin at that time before obedience. It is impossible then but the soul should stagger and be at a loss ; for it will judge of itself as it finds itself, and it cannot discern the habitual prevalency of Christ's interest, when they feel the actual prevalency of the flesh's interest. For the act is the only discoverer of the habit. And if Peter himself should have fallen to the examination of his heart, whether he preferred Christ before his life, at the same time when he was denying and forswearing Christ to save his life, do you think he could have discerned it ? And yet even then Christ's interest was greatest in him habitually. If David should have gone to search, whether he preferred obedience to God, before his fleshly pleasure, when he was committing adultery ; or before his credit, when he was plotting the death of Uriah, what discovery do you think he would have made ? 7. Add to all these, that as these several distempers, were they but in the same measure in a weak Christian, as they are in the best or in most, would yet make the smallest measure of grace undiscernible (if we might suppose the smallest grace to be consistent with such a frame) ; so it is certain, that whoever he be that hath the least measure of grace to discover

in himself, he hath proportionably the least measure of abilities and helps to discover it, and the greatest measure of all the forementioned hindrances. He that hath but a very little repentance, faith, love, and obedience sincere, when he goeth to find it out, he hath in the same measure, a darker understanding to discern it than others have; and a greater strangeness and disacquaintance with himself; and more deceitfulness in his heart, and a greater confusion and hurly-burly in his thoughts and affections, and all more out of order and to seek. Also he hath a greater backwardness to the work of self-examination, and can hardly get his heart to it, and more hardly to do it thoroughly, and search to the quick, and most hardly to hold on against all withdrawing temptations, till he have made a clearer discovery. And lastly, his soul is more mutable than stronger Christians are; and therefore when cross actings are so frequent, he cannot discern the smallest prevailing habit. If (when you are weighing gold) the scales be turned but with one grain, every little jog, or wind, or unsteadfast holding, will actually lift up the heavier end; and its preponderation is with great wavering and mobility. 8. Yet further, consider, that those that have least grace, have most sin, habitual and actual; and they are so frequent in transgressing, that their failings are still in their eye, and thereby the prevalency of Christ's interest is made more doubtful and obscure. For when he asketh his own conscience, 'Do I will or love most the world and my fleshly delights, or Christ and his ways?' Presently conscience remembereth him at such a time, and such a time thou didst choose thy fleshly pleasures, profits, or credit, and refuse obedience. And it is so oft, and so foully, that the soul is utterly at a loss, and cannot discern the habitual prevalent bent and resolution of the will. 9. Besides, conscience is a judge in man's soul, and will be accusing and condemning men so far as they are guilty. Now, they that make work for the most frequent and terrible accusations of conscience that will stand with true grace, are unlikely to have assurance. For assurance quiets the soul, and easeth it; and a galled conscience works the contrary way. They that keep open the wound, and daily fret off the skin more, and are still grating on the galled part, are unlikely to have assurance. 10. Again, these weakest Christians being least in

duty, and most in sinning (of any in whom sin reigneth not), they are consequently most in provoking and displeasing God. And they that do so shall find that God will shew them his displeasure, and will displease them again. They must not look to enjoy assurance, or see the pleased face of God, till they are more careful to please him, and are more sparing, and seldom in offending him. As God's universal justice in governing the world, will make as great a difference between the sincerely obedient, and disobedient, as there is between heaven and hell, so God's paternal justice in governing his family, will make as wide a difference between the more obedient children, and the less obedient, as is between his dreadful frowns, and his joyous, reviving smiles; or between his smarting rod, or his encouraging rewards. 11. If God should give assurance and peace to the sinning and least obedient believers, he should not fit his providential disposals to their good. It is not that which their state requires, nor would it tend to their cure any more than a healing plaister to a sore that is rotten in the bottom, or a cordial to the removal of a cacochymy, or the purging out of corrupt, redundant humours. They are so inclined to the lethargy of security, that they have need of continual pinching, striking, or loud calling on, to keep them waking; (still remember that by this weak Christian, I mean not every doubting, distressed soul that is weak in their own apprehension, and little in their own eyes, and poor in spirit; but I mean those that have the least measure of sincere love to Christ, and desire after him, and tenderness of conscience, and care to please God, and the greatest measure of security, worldliness, pride, flesh-pleasing, and boldness in sinning, which is consistent with sincerity in the faith. I believe there is no father or mother, that hath children to govern, but they know by experience, that there is a necessity of frowns and rods for the more disobedient; and that rewards and smiles are no cure for stubbornness or contempt. 12. Lastly, Do but well consider, what a solecism in government it would be, and what desperate inconveniences it would have brought into the world, if God should have set such a punctual land-mark between his kingdom and the kingdom of satan, as we are ready to dream of. If God should have said in his word, just so oft a man may be drunk, or may murder, or commit adul-

tery, or steal, or forswear himself, and yet be a true Christian and be saved ! Or just so far a man may go, in neglecting duty to God and man, and in cherishing his flesh, hiding, his sin, &c., and yet be a true believer and be saved. This would, 1. Embolden men in sinning, and make them think, I may yet venture, for I stand on safe ground. 2. And it would hinder repentance. Indeed it would be the way to rob God of his honour, and multiply provocations against him, and keep his children in disobedience, and hinder their growth in holiness, and cause a deformity in Christ's body, and a shame to his religion and sacred name. As for those that say, assurance never encourageth men in sin, but tends to destroy it ; I answer, it is true of God's assurance, seasonably given to those that are fit for it, and used by them accordingly. But if God should have told all the world, just how far they may sin, and yet be certain of salvation, this would have bred assurance in those that were unfit for it ; and it would have been but the putting of new wine into old cracked bottles ; or a new piece into an old garment, that would break them, or make worse the rent. I must therefore freely tell these objectors (I am sorry that so many of my old acquaintance now harp so much on this Antinomian string), that ignorance or error hath so blinded them, that they have forgotten, or know not, 1. What an imperfect piece the best is in this life, much more the worst true Christian. 2. Nor what a subtle devil we have to tempt us. 3. Nor what an active thing corruption is, and what advantage it will take on unseasonable assurance. 4. Nor what the nature of grace and sanctification is ; and how much of it lies in a godly jealousy of ourselves, and apprehension of our danger, and that "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom : " see Heb. iv. 1. Nay, 5. They have forgotten what a man is, and how inseparable from his nature is the principle of self-preservation, and how necessary the apprehension of danger, and the fear of evil to himself, is to the avoiding of that evil, and so to his preservation. 6. Yea, if they knew but what a commonwealth or a family is, they would know that fear of evil, and desire of self-preservation, is the very motive to associations, and the groundwork of all laws and government, and a great part of the life of all obedience.

And thus I have fully proved to you, that the smallest

measure of grace cannot help men to assurance in God's ordinary way.

Perhaps you will say, 'What comfort is there in this to a poor weak Christian?' This is rather the way to put him quite out of heart and hope. I answer, No such matter. I shall shew the uses of this observation in the following Directions. In the mean time I will say but this, The expectations of unseasonable assurance, and out of God's way, is a very great cause of keeping many in languishing and distress, and of causing others to turn Antinomians, and snatch at comforts which God never gave them, and to feign and frame an assurance of their own making, or build upon the delusions of the great deceiver, transforming himself into an angel of light.

Direct. XIII. From the last mentioned observation, there is one plain consecretary arising, which I think you may do well to note by the way, viz. 'That according to God's ordinary way of giving grace, it cannot be expected that Christians should be able to know the very time of their first receiving or acting true saving grace, or just when they were pardoned, justified, adopted, and put into a state of salvation.'

This must needs be undeniable, (if you grant the former point, That the least measure of grace yieldeth not assurance of its sincerity, which is proved); and withal, if you grant this plain truth, That it is God's ordinary way, to give a small measure of grace at the first. This I prove thus: 1. Christ likeneth God's kingdom of grace to a grain of mustard-seed, which is at the first, the least of all seeds, but after cometh to a tree; and to a little leaven, which leaveneth the whole lump. I will not deny, but this may be applied to the visible progress of the Gospel, and increase of the church. But it is plainly applicable also to the kingdom of Christ within us. 2. The Scripture oft calleth such young beginners, babes, children, novices, &c. 3. We are all commanded still to grow in grace; which implieth, that we have our smallest measure at the first. 4. Heb. v. 12. sheweth, that strength of grace should be according to time and means. 5. Common experience is an invincible argument for this. Men are at a distance from Christ, when he first calleth them to come to him; and many steps they have toward him before they reach to him. We are

first so far enlightened as to see our sin and misery, and the meaning and truth of the Gospel, and so roused out of our security, and made to look about us, and see that we have souls to save or lose, and that it is no jesting matter to be a Christian. And so we come to understand the tenor of the covenant, and Christ's terms of saving men. But, alas, how long is it usually after this, before we come sincerely to yield to his terms, and take him as he is offered, and renounce the world, flesh, and the devil, and give up ourselves to him in a faithful covenant! We are long deliberating, before we can get our backward hearts to resolve. How then should a man know just when he was past the highest step of common or preparative grace, and arrived at the first step of special grace?

Yet mark, that I here speak only of God's ordinary way of giving grace; for I doubt not, but in some God may give a higher degree of grace at the first day of their conversion, than some others do attain in many years. And those may know the time of their true conversion, both because the effect was so discernible, and because the suddenness makes the change more sensible and observable.

But this is not the ordinary course. Ordinarily convictions lie long on the soul before they come to a true conversion. Conscience is wounded, and smarting long, and long grudging against our sinful and negligent courses, and telling us of the necessity of Christ and a holy life, before we sincerely obey conscience, and give up ourselves to Christ. We seldom yield to the first conviction or persuasion. The flesh hath usually too long time given it to plead its own cause, and to say to the soul, 'Wilt thou forsake all thy pleasure and merry company and courses? Wilt thou beggar thyself? or make thyself a scorn or mocking-stock to the world? Art thou ever able to hold out in so strict a course? and to be undone? and to forsake all, and lay down thy life for Christ? Is it not better to venture thyself in the same way as thou hast gone in, as well as others do, and as so many of thy forefathers have done before thee?' Under such sinful deliberations as these we usually continue long before we fully resolve; and many demurs and delays we make before we conclude to take Christ on the terms that he is offered to us. Now I make no doubt but most or many Christians can remember how and when

God stirred their consciences, and wakened them from their security, and made them look about them, and roused them out of their natural lethargy. Some can tell what sermon first did it; others can remember by what degrees and steps God was doing it long. The ordinary way appointed by God for the doing of it first, is the instruction of parents. And (as I have more fully manifested in my Book of Infant Baptism) if parents would do their duties, they would find that the word publicly preached was not appointed to be the first ordinary means of conversion and sanctification; but commonly, grace would be received in childhood; I speak not of baptismal relative grace, consisting in the pardon of original sin, nor yet any infusion of habits before they have the use of reason (because I suppose it is hid from us, what God doth in that), but I speak of actual conversion; and I prove that this should be the first ordinary way and time of conversion to the children of true Christians, because it is the first means that God hath appointed to be used with them; Deut. vi. 6—8. Eph. vi. 4. Parents are commanded to teach their children the law of God urgently at home, and as they walk abroad, lying down, and rising up; and to bring them up in the admonition and nurture of the Lord, and to “train up a child in the way he should go and when they are old they will not depart from it;” Prov. xxii. 6. And children are commanded to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth;” Eccles. xii. 1. And if this be God’s first great means, then doubtless he will ordinarily bless his own means here, as well as in the preaching of the word.

From all this I would have you learn this lesson, That you ought not to trouble yourself with fears and doubts, lest you are not truly regenerate, because you know not the sermon or the very time and manner of your conversion; but find that you have grace, and then, though you know not just the time or manner of your receiving of it, yet you may nevertheless be assured of salvation by it. Search therefore what you are, and how your will is disposed and resolved, and how your life is ordered, rather than to know how you became such. I know the workings of the Spirit on the soul may be discerned, because they stir up discernible actings in our own spirits. The soul’s convictions, considerations, resolutions and affections, are no insensible things.

But yet the work of grace usually begins in common grace, and so proceeds by degrees till it come to special saving grace, even as the work of nature doth, first producing the matter, and then introducing the form ; first producing the embryo, before it introduce a rational soul. And as no child knows the time or manner of its own formation, vivification or reception of that soul, so I think few true believers can say, just such a day, or at such a sermon I became a true justified, sanctified man. That was the hour of your true conversion and justification, when you first preferred God and Christ, and grace before all things in this world, and deliberately and seriously resolved to take Christ for your Saviour and Governor, and give up yourself to him to be saved, taught and governed, and to obey him faithfully to the death against all temptations, whatsoever you shall lose or suffer by it. Now I would but ask those very Christians that think they do know the very sermon that converted them ; Did that sermon bring you to this resolution ? Or was it not only some troubling rousing preparation hereto ? I think some desperate sickness or the like affliction is a very usual means to bring resolutions to be downright and fixed, with many souls that long delayed and fluctuated in unresolvedness, and lay under mere ineffectual convictions.

Object. ' But this runs on your own grounds, that saving grace and common grace do differ but in degrees.'

Answ. I think most will confess, that as to the acts of grace, and that is it that we are now inquiring after ; and that is all the means that we have of discerning the habits. Yet remember that I still tell you, ' That there is a special moral difference, though grounded but in a gradual natural difference.' Yea, and that one grain of the Spirit's working, which turns the will in a prevalent measure for Christ, (together with the illumination necessary thereto) deserves all those eulogies and high titles that are given it in the word ; so great a change doth it make in the soul ! Well may it be called ' The new creature : ' ' Born of the Spirit : ' ' The workmanship of God : ' ' The new life : ' Yea, ' The image of God,' and ' The Divine Nature.' (If that text be not meant of the Divine Nature in Christ which we are relatively made partakers of in our union with him). When you are weighing things in the balance, you may add grain after grain, and it makes no turning or motion at all, till you

come to the very last grain, and then suddenly that end which was downward is turned upward. When you stand at a loss between two highways, not knowing which way to go, as long as you are deliberate, you stand still: all the reasons that come into your mind do not stir you; but the last reason which resolves you, setteth you in motion. So is it in the change of a sinner's heart and life; he is not changed (but preparing towards it) while he is but deliberating, whether he should choose Christ or the world? But the last reason that comes in and determineth his will to Christ, and makes him resolve and enter a firm covenant with Christ, and say, 'I will have Christ for better or worse;' this maketh the greatest change that ever is made by any work in this world. For how can there be greater than the turning of a soul from the creature to the Creator? So distant are the terms of this change. After this one turning act Christ hath that heart, and the main bent and endeavours of the life, which the world had before. The man hath a new end, a new rule and guide, and a new master. Before the flesh and the devil were his masters, and now Christ is his master. So that you must not think so meanly of the turning, determining, resolving act of grace, because it lieth but in a gradual difference naturally from common grace. If a prince should offer a condemned beggar to marry her, and to pardon her, and make her his queen, her deliberation may be the way to her consent, and one reason after another may bring her near to consenting. But it is that which turns her will to consent, resolve, covenant and deliver herself to him, which makes the great change in her state. Yet all the foregoing work of common grace hath a hand in the change, though only the turning resolution do effect it: it is the rest with this that doth it: as when the last grain turns the scales, the former do concur. I will conclude with Dr. Preston's words, in his "Golden Sceptre," page 210: *Object.* 'It seems then that the knowledge of a carnal man, and of a regenerate man, do differ but in degrees and not in kind.' *Answ.* The want of degrees here alters the kind, as in numbers, the addition of a degree alters the species and kind. Read for this also, Dr. Jackson "Of Saving Faith," sect. iii. chap. iii. pp. 297, 298. and frequently in other places. So much for that observation.

Direct. XIV. Yet further I would have you to under-

stand this : 'That as the least measure of saving grace is ordinarily undiscernible from the greatest measure of common grace, (notwithstanding the greatness of the change that it makes) so a measure somewhat greater is so hardly discernible, that it seldom brings assurance : and therefore it is only the stronger Christians that attain assurance ordinarily ; even those who have a great degree of faith and love, and keep them much in exercise, and are very watchful and careful in obedience : and consequently (most Christians being of the weaker sort) it is but few that do attain to assurance of their justification and salvation.'

Here are two or three points which I would have you distinctly to observe, though I lay them all together for brevity. 1. That it is only a greater measure of grace that will ordinarily afford assurance. 2. That therefore it is only the stronger, and holier, and more obedient sort of Christians that usually reach to a certainty of salvation. 3. That few Christians do reach to a strong or high degree of grace. 4. And therefore it is but few Christians that reach to assurance.

For the two first of these it will evidently appear that they are true, by reviewing the reasons which I gave of the last point save one. He that will attain to a certainty of salvation, must, 1. Have a large measure of grace to be discerned. 2. He must have that grace much in action, and lively action ; for it is not mere habits that are discernible. 3. He must have a clear understanding to be acquainted with the nature of spiritual things ; to know what is a sound evidence, and how to follow the search, and how to repel particular temptations. 4. He must have a good acquaintance and familiarity with his own heart, and to that end must be much at home, and be used sometimes to a diligent observation of his heart and ways. 5. He must be in a good measure acquainted with, and a conqueror of contradicting temptations. 6. He must have some competent cure of the deceitfulness of the heart, and it must be brought to an open, plain, ingenuous frame, willing to know the worst of itself. 7. He must have some cure of that ordinary confusion and tumultuous disorder that is in the thought and affections of men, and get things into an order in his mind. 8. He must be a man of diligence, resolution, and unwearied patience, that will resolvedly set on the work of self-examination, and painfully watch in it, and constantly follow it

from time to time till he attain a certainty. 9. He must be one that is very fearful of sinning, and careful in close obedient walking with God, and much in sincere and spiritual duty, that he keep not conscience still in accusing and condemning him, and God still offended with him, and his wounds fresh bleeding, and his soul still smarting. 10. He must be a man of much fixedness and constancy of mind, and not of the ordinary mutability of mankind; that so he may not by remitting his zeal and diligence, lose the sight of his evidences, nor by leaving open his soul to an alteration by every new intruding thought and temptation, let go his assurance as soon as he attaineth it. All these things in a good degree are necessary to the attaining of assurance of salvation.

And then do I need to say any more to the confirmation of the third point, That few Christians reach this measure of grace? O that it were not as clear as the light, and as discernible as the earth under our feet, that most true Christians are weaklings, and of the lower forms in the school of Christ? Alas, how ignorant are most of the best, how little love, or faith, or zeal, or heavenymindedness, or delight in God have they? How unacquainted with a frequent exercise of these graces? How unacquainted with the way of self-examination? And how backward to it? And how dull and careless in it? Doing it by the halves as Laban searched Rachel's tent? How easily put off with an excuse? How little acquainted with their own hearts? Or with satan's temptations and ways of deceiving? How much deceitfulness remaineth in their hearts? How confused are their minds? And what distractions and tumults are there in their thoughts? How bold are they in sinning? And how little tenderness of conscience, and care of obeying have they? How frequently do they wound conscience, provoke God, and obscure their evidences? And how mutable their apprehensions? And how soon do they lose that assurance which they once attained? And upon every occasion quite lose the sight of their evidences? Yea, and remit their actual resolutions, and so lose much of the evidence itself? Is not this the common case of godly people? O that we could truly deny it: let their lives be witness, let the visible neglects, worldliness, pride, impatience of plain reproof, remissness of zeal, dulness and cus-

tomariness in duty, strangeness to God, unwillingness to secret prayer and meditation, unacquaintedness with the Spirit's operations and joys, their unpeaceableness one with another, and their too frequent blemishing the glory of their holy profession by the unevenness of their walking, let all these witness, whether the school of Christ have not most children in it; and how few of them ever go to the university of riper knowledge: and how few of those are fit to begin here the works of their priestly office, which they must live in for ever, in the high and joyful praises of God, and of the Lamb, who hath redeemed them by his blood, and made them kings and priests to God, that they may reign with him for ever. I am content to stand to the judgment of all humble, self-knowing Christians, whether this be not true of most of themselves; and for those that deny it, I will stand to the judgment of their godly neighbours, who perhaps know them better than they know themselves.

And then this being all so, the fourth point is undeniable, That it is but very few Christians that reach to assurance of salvation. If any think (as intemperate hot-spirited men are like enough to charge me) that in all this I countenance the popish doctrine of doubting and uncertainty, and contradict the common doctrine of the reformed divines that write against them; I answer, 1. That I do contradict both the Papists that deny assurance, and many foreign writers, who make it far more easy, common, and necessary than it is (much more than them and the Antinomists, who place justifying faith in it). But I stand in the midst between both extremes; and I think I have the company of most English divines. 2. I come not to be of this mind merely by reading books, but mainly by reading my own heart, and consulting my own experience, and the experience of a very great number of godly people of all sorts, who have opened their hearts to me, for almost twenty years time. 3. I would entreat the gainsayers to study their own hearts better for some considerable time, and to be more in hearing the case and complaints of godly people; and by that time they may happily come to be of my mind. 4. See whether all those divines that have been very practical and successful in the work of God, and much acquainted with the way of recovery of lost souls, be not all of the same judgment as myself in this point, (such as T. Hooker, Jo. Rogers, Preston,

Sibbs, Bolton, Dod, Culverwell, &c.) And whether the most confident men for the contrary be not those that study books more than hearts, and spend their days in disputing, and not in winning souls to God from the world.

Lastly, Let me add to what is said, these two proofs of this fourth point here asserted.

1. The constant experience of the greatest part of believers tells us, that certainty of salvation is very rare. Even of those that live comfortably and in peace of conscience, yet very few of them do attain to a certainty. For my part, it is known that God in undeserved mercy hath given me long the society of a great number of godly people, and great interest in them, and privacy with them, and opportunity to know their minds, and this in many places (my station by providence having been oft removed), and I must needs profess, that of all these I have met with few, yea, very few indeed, that if I seriously and privately asked them, 'Are you certain that you are a true believer, and so are justified, and shall be saved,' durst say to me, 'I am certain of it.' But some in great doubts and fears : most too secure and neglective of their states without assurance, and some in so good hopes (to speak in their own language) as calmeth their spirits, that they can comfortably cast themselves on God in Christ. And those few that have gone so far beyond all the rest, as to say, 'They were certain of their sincerity and salvation,' were the professors, whose state I suspected more than any of the rest, as being the most proud, self-conceited, censorious, passionate, unpeaceable sort of professors ; and some of them living scandalously, and some fallen since to more scandalous ways than ever ; and the most of their humble, godly acquaintance or neighbours suspected them as well as I. Or else some very few of them that said they were certain were honest, godly people (most women) of small judgment and strong affections, who depended most on that which is commonly called, 'The sense or feeling of God's love ;' and were the lowest at some times as they were the highest at other times ; and they that were one month certain to be saved, perhaps the next month were almost ready to say, they should certainly be damned. So that taking out all these sorts of persons, the sober, solid, judicious believers that could groundedly and ordinarily say, 'I am certain that I

shall be saved,' have been so few, that it is sad to me to consider it. If any other men's experience be contrary, I am glad of it, so be it they be sober, judicious men, able to gather experiences; and so they live not among mere Antinomians, and take not the discovery of their mere opinion, for a discovery of experience. For I have seen in divers professors of my long acquaintance, the strange power of opinion and fancy in this thing. I have known those that have lived many years in doubting of their salvation, and all that while walked uprightly: and in the late wars, falling into the company of some Anabaptists, they were by them persuaded that there was no right way to their comfort, but by being re-baptized, and associating themselves with the re-baptized church, and abstaining from the hearing of the unbaptized parish-priests (as they called them.) No sooner was this done, but all their former doubtings and troubles were over, and they were as comfortable as any others (as themselves affirmed) which no doubt proceeded from partly the strength of fancy, conceiting it should be so, and partly from the novelty of their way which delighted them, and partly from the strong opinion they had that this was the way of salvation, and that the want of this did keep them in the dark so long; and partly from Satan's policy, who troubleth people least, when they are in a way that pleaseth him; but when these people had lived a year or two in this comfortable condition, they fell at last into the society of some Libertines or Familists, who believe that the Scriptures are all but a dream, fiction, or allegory; these presently persuaded them, that they were fools to regard baptism or such ordinances, and that they might come to hear again in our congregations, seeing all things were lawful, and there was no heaven or hell but within men, and therefore they should look to their safety and credit in the world, and take their pleasure. This lesson was quickly learned, and then they cried down the Anabaptists, and confessed they were deluded, and so being grown loose while they were Anabaptists, to mend the matter, they grew Epicures when they had been instructed by the Libertines; and this was the end of their new-gotten comfort. Others I have known that have wanted assurance, and falling among the Antinomians, were told by them that they undid themselves by looking after signs and marks of grace, and so

laying their comforts upon something in themselves ; whereas they should look only to Christ for comfort, and not at any thing in themselves at all ; and for assurance, it is only the witness of the Spirit without any marks that must give it them ; and to fetch comfort from their own graces and obedience, was to make it themselves instead of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and was a legal way. No sooner was this doctrine received, but the receivers had comfort at will, and all was sealed up to them presently by the witness of the Spirit in their own conceits. Whence this came, judge you. I told you my judgment before. Sure I am that the sudden looseness of their lives, answering their ignorant, loose, ungospel-like doctrine, did certify me that the Spirit of comfort was not their comforter ; for he is also a Spirit of holiness, and comforteth men by the means of a Holy Gospel, which hath precepts and threatenings as well as promises.

2. And as the experience of the state of believers assur-eth us that few of them attain to certainty ; so experience of the imperfection of their understanding shews us, that few of them are immediately capable of it. For how few believers be there that understand well what is sound evidence and what not ? Nay, how many learned men have taught them, that the least unfeigned desire of grace, is the grace itself, (as some say,) or at least a certain evidence of it, (as others say). Whereas, alas ! how many have unfeignedly desired many graces, and yet have desired the glory and profits of the world so much more, that they have miscarried and perished. How many have taught them, that the least unfeigned love to God or to the brethren, is a certain mark of saving grace ; whereas many a one hath unfeignedly loved God and the brethren, who yet have loved house, land, credit, pleasure, and life so much more, that God hath been thrust as it were into a corner, and hath had but the world's leavings. And the poor saints have had but little compassion or relief from them, nor would be looked on in times of danger and disgrace. As Austin and the schoolmen used to say, " Wicked men do, ' uti Deo, et frui creaturis,' Use God and enjoy the creatures ; godly men do ' frui Deo, et uti creaturis,' enjoy God and use the creatures." The meaning is, both regenerate and unregenerate have some will or love, both to God and to the creature :

but the wicked do will or love the creature as their chief good, with their chiefest love, and they only love God as a means to help them to the creature, with a love subordinate to their love to the creature : whereas the godly do will or love God as their chief good, with their chiefest love or complacency ; and love the creature but as a means to God, with an inferior love.

If then the nature of sincerity be so little known, then the assurance of sincerity cannot be very common. More might be said to prove that certainty of salvation is not common among true Christians ; but that it is labour in vain, as to them, seeing experience and their own ready confession doth witness it.

Now what is the use that I would have you make of this ? Why it is this. If assurance of sincerity and justification (much more of salvation) be so rare among true Christians, then you have no cause to think that the want of it proveth you to be no true Christian. You see then that a man may be in a state of salvation without it ; and that it is not justifying faith, as some have imagined, nor yet a necessary concomitant of that faith. You see that you were mistaken in thinking that you had not the Spirit of adoption, because you had no assuring witness within you effectively testifying to you that you are the child of God. All God's children have the Spirit of adoption. (For because they are sons, therefore hath God sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cry, ' Abba, Father ;' Gal. iv. 6.) But all God's children have not assurance of their adoption, therefore the Spirit of adoption doth not always assure those of their adoption in whom it abideth. It is always a witness-bearer of their adoption ; but that is only objectively by his graces and operations in them, as a land-mark is a witness whose land it is where it standeth ; or as your sheep-mark witnesseth which be your sheep ; or rather as a sensible soul witnesseth a living creature, or a rational soul witnesseth that we are men. But efficiently it doth not always witness ; as a land-mark or sheep-mark is not always discerned ; and a brute knows not itself to be a brute ; and a man is not always actually knowing his own humanity, nor can know it at all in the womb, in infancy, in distraction, in an epilepsy, apoplexy, or the like disease, which depriveth him of the use of reason. Besides, it is no doubt but

the apostle had some respect to the eminent gift of the Spirit, for tongues, prophecies, miracles, and the like, which was proper to that age ; though still as including the Spirit of holiness.

You see then that you need not be always in disquiet when you want assurance. For else how disquiet a life should most Christians live ! I shall shew you more anon, that all a man's comforts depend not so on his assurance, but that he may live a comfortable life without it. Trouble of mind may be overcome ; conscience may be quieted ; true peace obtained ; yea, a man may have that joy in the Holy Ghost, wherein the kingdom of God is said to consist, without certainty of salvation. (If there be any passages in my Book of Rest, part iii. pressing to get assurance, which seem contrary to this, I desire that they may be reduced to this sense, and no otherwise understood.) This shall be further opened anon, and other grounds of comfort manifested, besides assurance.

Direct. XV. Yea thus much more I would here inform you of, ' That many holy, watchful and obedient Christians, are yet uncertain of their salvation, even then when they are certain of their justification and sanctification ; and that because they are uncertain of their perseverance and overcoming ; for a man's certainty of his salvation can be no stronger than is his certainty of enduring to the end and overcoming.'

That you may not misunderstand me in this, observe, 1. That I do not say perseverance is a thing uncertain in itself. 2. Nor that it is uncertain to all Christians. 3. But that it is uncertain to many, even strong and self-knowing Christians. Divines use to distinguish of the certainty of the object and of the subject ; and the former is either of the object of God's knowledge, or of man's. I doubt not but God knows certainly who shall be saved, which, with his decree, doth cause that which we call certainty of the object as to man's understanding ; but men themselves do not always know it.

If a man have the fullest certainty in the world that he is God's child, yet if he be uncertain whether he shall so continue to the end, it is impossible that he should have a certainty of his salvation ; for it is he only that endureth to the end that shall be saved.

Now that many eminent Christians of great knowledge, and much zeal and obedience, are uncertain of their perseverance, is proved by two infallible arguments. 1. By experience : if any should be so censorious as to think that none of all those nations and churches abroad, that deny the doctrine of certain perseverance of all believers, have any strong Christians among them, yet we have had the knowledge of such at home. 2. Besides, the difficulty of the subject is a clear argument that a strong Christian may be uncertain of it. God hath made all those points plain in Scripture, which must be believed as of necessity to salvation ; but the certainty of all believers' perseverance, is not a point of flat necessity to salvation to be believed. Otherwise it would be a hard matter to prove, that any considerable number were ever saved till of late ; or are yet saved, but in a very few countries. It is a point that the churches never did put into their creed, where they summed up those points that they held necessary to salvation. There are a great number of texts of Scripture, which seeming to intimate the contrary, do make the point of great difficulty to many of the wisest ; and those texts that are for it, are not so express as fully to satisfy them. Besides, that the examples of these ten years last past have done more to stagger many sober wise Christians in this point, than all the arguments that ever were used by Papists, Arminians, or any other, to see what kind of men in some places have fallen, and how far, as I am unwilling further to mention.

But I think by this time I have persuaded you, that a proper certainty of our salvation is not so common a thing as some controversial doctors, or some self-conceited professors do take it to be ; and therefore that you must not lay all your comfort on your assurance of salvation. As for them who are most highly confident both of the doctrine of the certain perseverance of every believer, merely upon tradition and prejudice, or else upon weak grounds, which will not bear them out in their confidence ; and are as confident of their own salvation on as slender grounds, having never well understood the nature of saving grace, sincerity, examination, nor assurance ; nor understood the causes of doubting, which else might have shaken them ; I will not call their greatest confidence by the name of assurance or certainty of salvation, though it be accompanied with never

so great boastings, or pretences, or expressions of the highest joys. And for yourself, I advise you first use those comforts which those may have who come short of assurance.

Direct. XVI. The next thing which I would have you learn is this, 'That there are several grounds of the great probability of our salvation, besides the general grounds mentioned in the beginning: and by the knowledge of these, without any further assurance, a Christian may live in much peace and comfort, and in delightful, desirous thoughts of the glory to come. And therefore the next work which you have to do, is to discover those probabilities of your sincerity and your salvation, and then to receive the peace and comfort which they may afford you, before you can expect assurance in itself.

I shall here open to you the several parts of this proposition and direction distinctly. 1. I told you in the beginning of the four grounds of probability which all may have in general; from 1. The nature of God. 2. And of the Mediator and his office. 3. And the universal sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction. 4. And the general tenor of the promise, and offer of pardon and salvation. Now I add, that besides all these, there are many grounds of strong probability, which you may have of your own sincerity, and so of your particular interest in Christ and salvation, when you cannot reach to a certainty.

1. Some kind of probability you may gather by comparing yourself with others. Though this way be but delusory to unregenerate men whose confidence is plainly contradicted by the Scriptures, yet may it be lawful and useful to an humble soul that is willing to obey and wait on God: I mean to consider, that if such as you could perish how few people would God have in the world? Consider first in how narrow a compass the church was confined before Christ's coming in the flesh; how carnal and corrupt even that visible church then was; and even at this day, the most learned do compute, that if you divide the world into thirty parts, nineteen of them are heathenish idolators, six of them are Mahometans, and only five of them are Christians. And of these five that are Christians, how great a part are of the Ethiopian, Greek and Popish churches? So ignorant, rude, and superstitious, and erroneous, that salvation cannot be imagined to be near so easy or ordinary with them as with

us : and of the reformed churches, commonly called Protestants, how small is the number ? And even among these, what a number are grossly ignorant and profane ? And of those that profess more knowledge and zeal, how many are grossly erroneous, schismatical and scandalous ? How exceeding small a number is left then that are such as you ? I know this is no assuring argument, but I know withal that Christ died not in vain, but he will see the fruit of his sufferings to the satisfaction of his soul ; and the God of Mercy, who is a lover of mankind, will have a multitude innumerable of his saved ones in the earth.

2. But your strongest probabilities are from the consideration of the work of God upon your souls, and the present frame and inclination of your soul to God. You may know that you have workings above nature in you ; and that they have been kept alive and carried on these many years against all opposition of the flesh and the world ; it hath not been a mere flash of conviction which hath been extinguished by sensuality, and left you in the darkness of security and profaneness as others are. You dare not give up your hopes of heaven for all the world. You would not part with Christ, and say, ‘ Let him go,’ for all the pleasures of sin, or treasures of the earth. If you had (as you have) an offer of God, Christ, grace, and glory on one side, and worldly prosperity in sin on the other side, you would choose God, and let go the other. You dare not, you would not give over praying, hearing, reading and Christian company, and give up yourself to worldly, fleshly pleasures ; yet you are not assured of salvation, because you find not that delight and life in duty, and that witness of the Spirit, and that communion with God, nor that tenderness of heart as you desire. It is well that you desire them ; but though you be not certain of salvation, do not you see a great likelihood, a probability in all this ? Is not your heart raised to a hope, that yet God is merciful to you, and means you good ? Doubtless, this you might easily discern.

The second thing that I am to shew you, is, that there may much spiritual comfort and peace of conscience be enjoyed, without any certainty of salvation, even upon these forementioned probabilities. Which I prove thus, 1. No doubt but Adam in innocency, had peace of conscience, and comfort, and communion with God, and yet he had no as-

surance of salvation ; I mean, either of continuing in paradise, or being translated to glory. For if he had, either he was sure to persevere in innocency, and so to be glorified, (but that was not true,) or else he must foreknow both that he should fall and be raised again, and saved by Christ. But this he knew not at all. 2. Experience tells us, that the greatest part of Christians on earth do enjoy that peace and comfort which they have, without any certainty of their salvation. 3. The nature of the thing telleth us, that a likelihood of so great a mercy as everlasting glory, must needs be a ground of great comfort. If a poor condemned prisoner do but hear that there is hopes of a pardon, especially if very probable, it will glad his heart. Indeed, if an angel from heaven were brought into this state, it would be sad to him ; but if a devil or condemned sinner have such hope, it must needs be glad news to them. The devils have it not, but we have.

3. Let me next, therefore, entreat you to take the comfort of your probabilities of grace and salvation. Your horse or dog know not how you will use them certainly ; yet will they lovingly follow you, and put their heads to your hand, and trust you with their lives without fear, and love to be in your company, because they have found you kind to them, and have tried that you do them no hurt, but good : yea, though you do strike them sometimes, yet they find that they have their food from you, and your favour doth sustain them. Yea, your little children have no certainty how you will use them, and yet finding that you have always used them kindly, and expressed love to them, though you whip them sometimes, yet are glad of your company, and desire to be in your lap, and can trust themselves in your hands, without tormenting themselves with such doubts as these, ‘I am uncertain how my mother will use me, whether she will wound me, or kill me, or turn me out of doors, and let me perish.’ Nature persuades us not to be too distrustful of those that have always befriended us, and especially whose nature is merciful and compassionate ; nor to be too suspicious of evil from them that have always done us good. Every man knows that the good will do good, and the evil will do you evil ; and accordingly we expect that they should do to us. Naturally we all fear a toad, a serpent, an adder, a mad dog, a wicked man, a madman, a cruel, blood-

thirsty tyrant, and the devil. But no one fears a dove, a lamb, a good man, a merciful, compassionate governor, except only the rebels or notorious offenders that know he is bound in justice to destroy or punish them. And none should fear distrustfully the wrath of a gracious God, but they who will not submit to his mercy, and will not have Christ to reign over them, and therefore may know that he is bound in justice, if they come not in, to destroy them. But for you that would be obedient and reformed, and are troubled that you are no better, and beg of God to make you better, and have no sin, but what you would be glad to be rid of, may not you, at least, see a strong probability that it shall go well with you? O make use therefore of this probability; and if you have but hopes that God will do you good, rejoice in those hopes till you can come to rejoice in assurance.

And here let me tell you, that probabilities are of divers degrees, according to their divers grounds. Where men have but a little probability of their sincerity, and a greater probability that they are not sincere in the faith, these men may be somewhat borne up, but it behoves them presently to search in fear, and to amend that which is the cause of their fear. Those that have more probability of the sincerity of their hearts than of the contrary, may well have more peace than trouble of mind. Those that have yet a higher degree of probability, may live in more joy, and so according to the degree of probability may their comforts still arise.

And observe also, that it is but the highest degree of this probability here which we call a certainty: for it is a moral certainty, and not that which is called a certainty of divine faith, nor that which is called a certainty of evidence in the strictest sense, though yet evidence there is for it. But it is the same evidences materially, which are the ground of probability and of certainty; only sometimes they differ gradually (one having more grace, and another less), and sometimes not so neither; for he that hath more grace, may discern but a probability in it (through some other defect), no more than he that hath less. But when one man discerns his graces and sincerity but darkly, he hath but a probability of salvation manifested by them; and when another discerneth them more clearly, he hath a stronger probability; and

he that discerneth them most clearly (if other necessities concur) hath that which we call a certainty.

Now I am persuaded that you frequently see a strong probability of your sincerity; and may not that be a very great stay and comfort to your soul? Nay, may it not draw out your heart in love, delight and thankfulness? Suppose that your name were written in a piece of paper, and put among a hundred, or fifty, or but twenty other like paper into a lottery, and you were certain that you should be the owner of this whole land, except your name were drawn the first time, and if it were drawn you should die, would your joy or your sorrow for this be the greater? Nay, if it were but ten to one, or but two to one odds on your side, it would keep you from drooping and discouragement; and why should it not do so in the present case?

Direct. XVII. My next advice to you is this, 'For the strengthening your apprehensions of the probability of your salvation, gather up, and improve all your choicest experiences of God's goodwill and mercy to you; and observe also the experiments of others in the same kind.'

We do God and ourselves a great deal of wrong by forgetting, neglecting, and not improving our experiences. How doth God charge it on the Israelites, especially in the wilderness, that they forgot the works of God, by which he had so often manifested his power and goodness! Psalm lxxviii. cvii. See cv. cvi. When God had by one miracle silenced their unbelief, they had forgotten it in the next distress. It was a sign the disciples' hearts were hardened, when they forgot the miracles of the loaves, and presently after were distrustful and afraid; Mark vi. 52. God doth not give us his mercies only for the present use, but for the future; nor only for the body, but for the soul. I would this truth were well learned by believers. You are in sickness, in troubles, and dangers, and pinching straits, in fears and anguish of mind: in this case you cry to God for help, and he doth in such a manner deliver you as silenceth your distrust, and convinceth you of his love; at least, of his readiness to do you good. What a wrong is it now to God and yourself, to forget this presently, and in the next temptation, to receive no strengthening by the consideration of it? Doth God so much regard this dirty flesh, that he should do all this merely for its ease and relief? No, he doth it to

kill your unbelief, and convince you of his special providence, his care of you, and love to you, and power to help you, and to breed in you more loving, honourable and thankful thoughts of him. Lose this benefit, and you lose all. You may thus use one and the same mercy an hundred times: though it be gone as to the body, it is still fresh in a believing, thankful, careful soul. You may make as good use of it at your very death, as the first hour. But O, the sad forgetfulness, mutability and unbelief of these hearts of ours! What a number of these choice experiences do we all receive! When we forget one, God giveth another, and we forget that too. When unbelief doth blasphemously suggest to us, Such a thing may come once or twice by chance. God addeth one experience to another, till it even shame us out of our unbelief, as Christ shamed Thomas, and we cry out, "My Lord and my God." Hath it not been thus oft with you? Have not mercies come so seasonably, so unexpectedly, either by small means, or the means themselves unexpectedly raised up; without your designing or effecting; and plainly in answer to prayers, that they have brought conviction along with them; and you have seen the name of God engraven on them? Sure it is so with us, when through our sinful negligence we are hardly drawn to open our eyes, and see what God is doing. Much more might we have seen, if we had but observed the workings of Providence for us; especially they that are in an afflicted state, and have more sensibly daily use for God, and are awakened to seek him, and regard his dealings. I know a mercy to the body is no certain evidence of God's love to the soul. But yet from such experiences a Christian may have very strong probabilities. When we find God hearing prayers, it is a hopeful sign that we have some interest in him. We may say as Manoah's wife said to him, "If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have received a sacrifice at our hands, nor have done all this for us;" Judges xiii. 23. To have God so near to us in all that we call upon him for, and so ready to relieve us, as if he could not deny an earnest prayer, and could not endure to stop his ears against our cries and groans, these are hopeful signs that he meaneth us good. I know special grace is the only certain evidence of special love: but yet these kind of experiences are many times more effectual to refresh a drooping, doubting

soul, than the first evidences: for evidences may be unseen, and require a great deal of holy skill and diligence to try them, which few have; but these experiences are near us, even in our bodies, and shew themselves; they make all our bones say, "Lord, who is like unto thee?" And it is a great advantage to have the help of sense itself for our consolation. I hope you yet remember the choice particular providences, by which God hath manifested to you his goodness, even from your youth till now: especially his frequent answering of your prayers! Methinks these should do something to the dispelling of those black, distrustful thoughts of God. I could wish you would write them down, and oft review them: and when temptations next come, remember with David, who helped you against the lion and the bear, and, therefore, fear not the uncircumcised Philistine.

2. And you may make great use also of the experiences of others. Is it not a great satisfaction to hear twenty, or forty, or an hundred Christians, of the most godly lives, to make the very same complaints as you do yourself? The very same complaints have I heard from as many. By this you may see your case is not singular, but the ordinary case of the tenderest consciences, and of many that walk uprightly with God. And also is it not a great help to you, to hear other Christians tell how they have come into those troubles, and how they have got out of them? What hurt them? And what helped them? And how God dealt with them, while they lay under them? How desirous are diseased persons to talk with others that have had the same disease? And to hear them tell how it took them, and how it held them, and especially what cured them? Besides, it will give you much stronger hopes of cure and recovery to peace of conscience, when you hear of so many that have been cured of the same disease. Moreover, is it not a reviving thing, to hear Christians open the goodness of the Lord? And that in particular, as upon experience they have found him to their own souls? To hear them tell you of such notable discoveries of God's special providence and care of his people, as may repel all temptations to atheism and unbelief? To hear them give you their frequent and full experiences of God's hearing and answering their prayers, and helping them in their distresses? Though the carnal part of the

mercy were only theirs, yet by improvement, the spiritual part may be yours: you may have your faith, and love, and joy, confirmed by the experiences of David, Job, Paul, which are past so long ago; and by the experiences of all your godly acquaintance, as if they were your own. This is the benefit of the unity of the church; the blessings of one member of the body are blessings to the rest; and if one rejoice, the rest may rejoice with them, not only for their sakes, but also for their own. Such as God is to the rest of his children, such is he and will be to you. He is as ready to pity you as them, and to hear your complaints and moans as theirs. And lest we should think that none of them were so bad as we, he hath left us the examples of his mercies to worse than ever we were. You never were guilty of witchcraft, and open idolatry, as Manasses was, and that for a long time, and drawing the whole nation, and chief part of the visible church on earth, into idolatry with him. You never had your hand in the blood of a saint, and even of the first martyr (Stephen) as Paul had. You never hunted after the blood of the saints, and persecuted them from city to city as he did; and yet God did not only forgive him, but was found of him when he never sought him, yea, when he was persecuting him in his members, and kicking against the pricks; yea, and made him a chosen vessel to bear about his name, and as noble an instrument of the propagation of his Gospel, as if he had never been guilty of any such crimes, that he might be an encouraging example to the unworthiest sinners, and in him might appear to the riches of his mercy; 1 Tim. iii. 13. 16. See also Titus iii. 3—7. Is there no ground of comfort in these examples of the saints? The same we may say of the experiences of God's people still; and doubtless it were well if experimental Christians did more fully and frequently open to one another their experiences; it were the way to make private particular mercies to be more public and common mercies; and to give others a part in our blessings, without any diminution of them to ourselves. Not that I would have this so openly and rashly done, (by those, who through their disability to express their minds, do make the works and language of spirit seem ridiculous to carnal ears) as I perceive some in a very formality would have it (as if it must be one of their church customs, to satisfy the society of the fitness of each member

before they will receive them): but I would have Christians that are fit to express their minds, to do it in season and with wisdom; especially those to whom God hath given any more eminent and notable experiments, which may be of public use. Doubtless, God hath lost very much of the honour due to his name, and poor Christians much of the benefit which they might have received, (and may challenge by the mutual interest of fellow members) for want of the public communication of the extraordinary and more notable experiences of some men. Those that write the lives of the holiest men when they are dead, can give you but the outside and carcase of their memorials; the most observable passages are usually secret, known only to God and their own souls, which none but themselves are able to communicate. For my own part, I do soberly and seriously profess to you, that the experiences I have had of God's special providences, and fatherly care, and specially of his hearing prayers, have been so strange, and great, and exceeding numerous, that they have done very much to the quieting of my spirit, and the persuading of my soul of God's love to me, and the silencing and shaming of my unbelieving heart, and especially for the conquering of all temptations that lead to atheism or infidelity, to the denying of special providence, or of the verity of the Gospel, or of the necessity of holy prayer and worshipping of God. Yea, those passages that in the bulk of the thing seem to have no great matter in them, yet have come at such seasons, in such a manner, in evident answer to prayers, that they have done much to my confirmation. O happy afflictions and distresses! Sufferings and danger force us to pray, and force the cold and customary petitioner to seriousness and importunity. Importunate prayers bring evident returns; such returns give us sensible experiences; such experiences raise faith, love and thankfulness, kill unbelief and atheism, and encourage the soul in all distresses, to go the same way as when it sped so well. I often pity the poor seduced infidels of this age, that deny Scripture and Christ himself, and doubt of the usefulness of prayer and holy worship; and I wish that they had but the experiences that I have had. O how much more might it do than all their studies and disputes! Truly I have once or twice had motions in my mind, to have publicly and freely communicated by experiences in a relation

of the more observable passages of my life ; but I found that I was not able to do it to God's praise, as was meet, without a shew of ostentation or vanity, and therefore I forbore.

Direct. XVIII. Next, that you may yet further understand the true nature of assurance, faith, doubting and desperation, I would have you observe this, 'That God doth not command every man, nor properly any man, ordinarily by his word, to believe that his sins are forgiven, and himself is justified, adopted, and shall be saved. But he hath prescribed a way by which they may attain to assurance of these, in which way it is men's duty to seek it : so that our assurance is not properly that which is called a certainty of belief.'

I have said enough for the proof of this proposition in the third part of my Book of Rest, Chap. ii. whither I must refer you. But there is more to be said yet for the application of it. But first I must briefly tell you the meaning of the words. 1. God commandeth us all to believe (wicked and godly), that our sins are made pardonable by the sufficient satisfaction of Christ for them ; and that God is very merciful and ready to forgive ; and that he hath conditionally forgiven us all in the new covenant, making a deed of gift of Christ, and pardon, and life in him to all, on condition they believe in him, and accept what is given. 2. But no man is commanded to believe that he is actually forgiven. 3. Therefore I say our assurance is not strictly to be called belief, or a certainty of belief ; for it is only our certain belief of those things which we take on the mere credit of the witnesser or revealer, which we call certainty of faith. Indeed, we commonly in English use the word 'belief,' to express any confident, but uncertain, opinion or persuasion ; and if any will so take it, then I deny not but our assurance is a belief. But it is commonly taken by divines for an assent to any thing on the credit of the word of the revealer, and so is distinguished both from the sensible apprehension of things, and from principles that are known by the mere light and help of nature ; and from the knowledge of conclusions, which by reasoning we gather from those principles. Though yet one and the same thing may be known, as revealed in nature, and believed as revealed immediately or supernaturally ; and so we both know and believe that there is one only God, who made and preserveth all things:

4. But our assurance is an act of knowledge, participating of faith and internal sense or knowledge reflect. For divine faith saith, "He that believeth is justified, and shall be saved." Internal sense and knowledge of ourselves saith, 'But I believe.' Reason, or discursive knowledge saith, 'Therefore I am justified and shall be saved.'

Only I must advise you, that you be not troubled when you meet with that which is contrary to this in any great divines : for it is only our former divines, whose judgments were partly hurt by hot disputations with the Papists herein, and partly not come to that maturity as others since then have had opportunity to do. And therefore in their expositions of the creed, and such like passages in the text, they eagerly insist on it, that when we say, 'We believe the forgiveness of sin, and life everlasting,' every man is to profess that he believeth that his own sins are forgiven, and he shall have life everlasting himself. But our later divines, and especially the English, and most especially those that deal most in practicals, do see the mistake, and lay down the same doctrine which I teach you here ; God bids us not believe as from him, more than he hath revealed. But only one of the propositions is revealed by God's testimony, "He that believeth shall be saved.' But it is no where written that you do believe, nor that you shall be saved ; nor any thing equivalent. And therefore you are not commanded to believe either of these. How the Spirit revealeth these, I have fully told you already. In our creed therefore we do profess to believe remission of sins to be purchased by Christ's death, and in his power to give, and given in the Gospel to all, on condition of believing in Christ himself for remission : but not to believe that our own sins are actually and fully pardoned.

My end in telling you this again (which I have told you elsewhere) is this, That you may not think (as I find abundance of poor troubled souls do) that faith (much less justifying faith) is a believing that you have true grace, and shall be saved ; and so fall a condemning yourself unjustly every time that you doubt of your own sincerity, and think that so much as you doubt of this, so much unbelief you have : and so many poor souls complain that they have no faith, or but little, and that they cannot believe, because they believe not their own faith to be sincere : and when they wholly judge

themselves unsanctified, then they call that desperation, which they think to be a sin inconsistent with true grace. These are dangerous errors, all arising from that one error which the heat of contention did carry some good men to, that faith is a belief that our sins are forgiven by Christ. Indeed all men are bound to apply Christ and the promise to themselves. But that application consisteth in a belief that this promise is true, as belonging to all, and so to me, and then in acceptance of Christ and his benefits as an offered gift; and after this, in trusting on him for the full performance of this promise. Hence therefore you may best see what unbelief and desperation are, and how far men may charge themselves with them. When you doubt whether the promise be true, or when you refuse to accept Christ and his benefits offered in it, and consequently to trust him as one that is able and willing to save you, if you do assent to his truth, and accept him, this is unbelief. But if you do believe the truth of the Gospel, and are heartily willing to accept Christ as offered in it, and only doubt whether your belief and acceptance of him be sincere, and so whether you shall be saved; this is not unbelief, but ignorance of your own sincerity, and its consequents. Nay, and though that affiance be wanting, which is a part of faith, yet it is but an hindering of the exercise of it, for want of a necessary concomitant condition; for the grace of affiance is in the habit, and virtually is there, so that it is not formally distrust or unbelief any more, than your not trusting God in your sleep is distrust. If a friend do promise to give you an hundred pounds, on condition that you thankfully accept it: if you now do believe him, and do thankfully accept it; but yet through some vain scruple shall think, my thankfulness is so small, that it is not sincere, and therefore I doubt I do not perform his condition, and so shall never have the gift; in this case now you do believe your friend, and you do not distrust him properly; but you distrust yourself, that you perform not the condition; and this hindereth the exercise of that confidence or affiance in your friend which is habitually and virtually in you. Just so is it in our present case.

The same may be said of desperation, which is a privation of hope; when we have believed the truth of the Gospel, and accepted Christ offered, we are then bound to hope

that God will give us the benefits promised : so hope is nothing but a desirous expectation of the good so promised and believed. Now if you begin to distrust whether God will make good his promise or no, either thinking that it is not true, or he is not able, or hath changed his mind since the making of it, and on these grounds you let go your hopes, this is despair. If because that Christ seems to delay his coming, we should say I have waited in hope till now, but now I am out of hope that ever Christ will come to judge the world, and glorify believers, I will expect it no longer. This is despair. And it hath its several degrees more or less as unbelief hath. Indeed the schoolmen say that affiance is nothing but strengthened hope. Affiance in the properest sense is the same in substance as hope ; only it more expresseth a respect to the promise and promiser, and indeed is faith and hope expressed in one word. So that what I said before of distrust is true of despair. If you do continue to believe the truth of the Gospel, and particularly of Christ's coming and glorifying his saints, and yet you think he will not glorify you, because you think that you are not a true believer or saint ; this is not desperation in the proper sense. For desperation is the privation of hope, where the formal cause, the heart and life of it, is wanting. But you have here hope in the habit, and virtually do hope in Christ ; but the act of it, as to your own particular salvation is hindered, upon an accidental mistake. In the forementioned example, if your friend promise to give you an hundred pounds on condition of your thankful acceptance, and promiseth to come at such an hour and bring it you : if now you stay till the hour be almost come, and then say, ' I am out of hope of his coming now ; he hath broke his word ; ' this is properly a despair in your friend. But if you only think that you have overstaid the time, and that it is past, and therefore you shall not have the gift, this may be called a despair of the event, and a despair in yourself, but not properly a despair of your friend ; only the act of hoping in God is hindered, as is said. So it is in our present case. Men may be said to despair of their salvation, and to despair in themselves, but not to despair in God, except the formal cause of such despair were there present ; and except they are drawn to it, by not believing his truth and faithfulness. The true nature of despair is ex-

pressed in that of the apostles, Luke xxiv. 21. "We trusted that that was he that should redeem Israel;" only it was but imperfect despair, else it had been damnable. Their hopes were shaken. And for my part, I am persuaded that it is only this proper despair in God, which is the damnable desperation, which is threatened in the Scripture, and not the former. And that if a poor soul should go out of this world without any actual hope of his own salvation, merely because he thinks that he is no true believer, that this soul may be saved, and prove a true believer for all this. Alas! the great sin that God threateneth is our distrust of his faithfulness, and not the doubting of our own sincerity and distrust of ourselves. We have great reason to be very jealous of our own hearts, as knowing them to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know them? But we have no reason to be jealous of God. Where find you in Scripture that any is condemned for hard thoughts of themselves, or for not knowing themselves to have true grace, and for thinking they had none? It is true, unbelief in God's promise is that men are condemned for, even that sin which is an aversion of the soul from God. But perhaps you will ask, is doubting of our own sincerity and salvation no sin? I answer, doubting is either taken in opposition to believing, or in opposition to knowing, or to conjecturing.

1. Doubting as it signifieth only a not believing that our sins are pardoned, and we shall be saved, is no sin, (still remember that I take believing in the strict, proper sense of the crediting of a divine testimony or assertion). For God hath no where commanded us ordinarily to believe either of these. I say ordinarily (as I did in the proposition before) because when Christ was on earth he told a man personally, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" (whether he meant only as to the present disease inflicted for them, or also all punishment temporal and eternal, I will not now discuss) so Nathan from God told Dâvid, his sin was forgiven. But these were privileges only to these persons, and not common to all. God hath no where said, either that all men's sins are actually forgiven; or that yours or mine by name are forgiven: but only that all that believe are forgiven, which supposeth them to believe before they are forgiven, and that they may be forgiven, and therefore

it is not true that they are forgiven before they believe. And therefore this faith is not a believing that they are forgiven, but a believing on Christ for forgiveness. Else men must believe an untruth, to make it become true by their believing it.

2. But now doubting, as it is opposed to the knowledge of our remission and justification, in those that are justified is a sin. For it can be no sin for an unjustified person to know that he is unjustified. But then I pray you mark how far it is a sin in the godly, and what manner of sin it is. 1. It is a sin, as it is part of our natural ignorance, and original depravedness of our understandings, or a fruit hereof, and of our strangeness to our own hearts, and of their deep deceitfulness, confusion, mutability, or negligence. 2. And further, as all these are increased by long custom in sinning, and so the discerning of our states is become more difficult, it is yet a greater sin. 3. It is a sin as it is the fruit of any particular sin by which we have obscured our own graces, and provoked God to hide his face from us. And so all ignorance of any truth which we ought to know, is a sin; so the ignorance of our own regeneration and sincerity is a sin, because we ought to know it. But this is so far from being the great condemning sin of unbelief which Christ threateneth in his new law, that it is none of the greatest or most heinous sort of sins, but the infirmity in some measure of every Christian.

And let me further acquaint you with this difference between these doubtings, and your fears and sorrows that follow thereupon. Though the doubtings itself be your sin, yet I suppose that the fears, and sorrows, and cares that follow it may be your duty. Yet respectively, and by remote participation, even these also must be acknowledged sinful; even as our prayers for that pardon which we have received and knew it not, may by remote participation be called sinful; because if we had not sinned we should not have been ignorant of our own hearts. And if we had not been ignorant, we should not have doubted of the least true grace we have. And if we had not so doubted, we should not have feared, or sorrowed, or prayed for that remission in that sense. But yet, though these may be called sinful, as they come from sin, yet more nearly and in themselves considered, on supposition of our present estate, they are all

duties, and great duties necessary to our salvation. You may say to a thief that begs for pardon, 'If thou hadst not stolen, thou hadst not need to have begged pardon.' Yet supposing that he hath stolen, it may be his duty to beg pardon. And so you may say to a poor, fearing soul, that fears damnation and God's wrath, 'Thou needst not fear if thou hadst not sinned.' But when he hath once by sin obscured his evidences, and necessitated doubting, then is fear, and sorrow, and praying for justification and pardon, his duty, and indeed not fitly to be called sin, but rather a fruit of sin in one respect (and so hath some participation in it) but a fruit of the Spirit, and of Christ's command in another respect, and so a necessary duty. For else we should say, that it is a sin to repent and believe in Christ, and to love him as our Redeemer; for you may say to any sinner, 'Thou needst not to have repented, believed in a Redeemer, &c. but for thy sin;' yet I hope none will say, that so doing is properly a sin, though doing them defectively is. God doth not will and approve of it, that any soul that can see no signs of grace and sincerity in itself should yet be as confident, and merry, and careless, as if they were certain that all were well. God would not have men doubt of his love, and yet make light of it. This is a contempt of him. Else what should poor, carnal sinners do that find themselves unsanctified. No, nor doth God expect that any man should judge of himself better than he hath evidence to warrant such a judgment. But that every man should "prove his own work, that so he may have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For he that thinketh he is something when he is nothing, deceiveth himself;" Gal. vi. 3—6. And no man should be a self-deceiver, especially in a case of such inexpressible consequence. It is therefore a most desperate doctrine of the Antinomians (as most of theirs are) that all men ought to believe God's special love to them, and their own justification. And that they are justified by believing that they were justified before, and that no man ought to question his faith (saith Saltmarsh, any more than to question Christ). And that all fears of our damnation, or not being justified after this believing, are sin; and those that persuade to them, are preachers of the law, (how punctually do the most profane, ungodly people, hold most points of the Antinomian belief, though they ne-

ver knew that sect by name?). God commandeth no man to believe more than is true, not immediately to cast away their doubts and fears, but to overcome them in an orderly methodical way; that is, using God's means till their graces become more discernible, and their understandings more clear and fit to discern them, that so we may have assurance of their sincerity, and thereby of our justification, adoption, and right to glorification. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it;" Heb. iv. 1. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him in trembling; kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish;" Psal. ii. 11. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;" Phil. ii. 12. Not only, 1. A reverent fear of God's majesty. 2. And a filial fear of offending him. 3. And an awful fear of his judgments, when we see them executed on others, and hear them threatened. 4. And a filial fear of temporal chastisements are lawful and our duty; but also, 5. A fear of damnation exciting to most careful importunity to escape it; whenever we have so far obscured our evidences, as to see no strong probability of our sincerity in the faith, and so of our salvation. The sum of my speech therefore is this: Do not think that all your fears of God's wrath are your sins; much of them is your great duty. Do you not feel that God made these fears at your first conversion, the first and a principal means of your recovery? To drive you to a serious consideration of your state and ways, and to look after Christ with more longing and estimation? And to use the means with more resolution and diligence? Have not these fears been chief preservers of your diligence and integrity ever since? I know love should do more than it doth with us all. But if we had not daily use for both (love and fear) God would not, 1. Have planted them both in our natures. 2. And have renewed them both by regenerating grace. 3. And have put into his word the objects to move both, (*viz.* threatenings as well as promises). That fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, includeth the fear of his threatened wrath. I could say abundance more to prove this, but that I know as to you it is needless for conviction of it; but remember the use of it. Do not put the name of unbelief upon all your fears of God's displeasure. Much less should you presently conclude that you have no

faith, and that you cannot believe, because of these fears. You may have much faith in the midst of these fears; and God may make them preservers of your faith, by quickening you up to those means that must maintain it, and by keeping you from those evils that would be as a worm at the root of it, and eat out its precious strength and life. Security is no friend to faith, but a more deadly enemy than fear itself.

Object. 'Then Cain and Judas sinned not by despairing, or at least not damnably.'

Answ. 1. They despaired not only of themselves, and of the event of their salvation, but also of God; of his power or goodness, and promise, and the sufficiency of any satisfaction of Christ. Their infidelity was the root of their despair. 2. Far it is for me to say or think that you should despair of the event, or that it is no sin; yea, or that you should cherish causeless and excessive jealousies and fears. Take heed of all fears that drive you from God, or that distract or weaken your spirit, or disable you from duty, or drown your love to God, and delight in him, and destroy your apprehensions of God's loveliness and compassion, and raise black, and hard, and unworthy thoughts of God in your mind. Again, I entreat you, avoid and abhor all such fears. But if you find in you the fears of godly jealousy of your own heart, and such moderated fears of the wrath of God, which banish security, presumption, and boldness in sinning, and are (as Dr. Sibbs calls them) the awe-band of your soul; and make you fly to the merits and bosom of the Lord Jesus, as the affrighted child to the lap of the mother, and as the man-slayer under the law to the city of refuge, and as a man pursued by a lion, to his sanctuary or hold; do not think you have no faith, because you have these fears, but moderate them by faith and love, and then thank God for them. Indeed perfect love (which will be in heaven when all is perfected) will cast out this fear; and so it will do sorrow and care, and prayer and means. But see you lay not these by till perfect love cast them out. See Jer. v. 22, 23. Heb. xii. two last verses. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

I am sensible that I am too large on these foregoing

heads; I will purposely shorten the rest, lest I weary you.

Direct. XIX. Further understand, 'That those few who do attain to assurance, have it not either perfectly or constantly (for the most part) but mixed with imperfection, and oft clouded and interrupted.'

That the highest assurance on earth is imperfect, I have shewed you elsewhere. If we be imperfect, and our faith imperfect, and the knowledge of our own hearts imperfect, and all our evidences and graces imperfect; then our assurance must needs be imperfect also. To dream of perfection on earth, is to dream of heaven on earth. And if assurance may be here perfect, why not all our graces? Even when all doubtings are overcome, yet is assurance far short of the highest degree.

Besides, that measure of assurance which godly men do partake of, hath here its many sad interruptions, in the most. Upon the prevalency of temptations, and the hidings of God's face, their souls are oft left in a state of sadness, that were but lately in the arms of Christ. How fully might this be proved from the examples of Job, David, Jeremy, and others in Scripture? And much more abundantly by the daily complaints and examples of the best of God's people now living among us. As there is no perfect evenness to be expected in our obedience while we are on earth, so neither will there be any constant or perfect evenness in our comforts. He that hath life in one duty, is cold in the next. And therefore he that hath much joy in one duty, hath little in the next. Yea, perhaps duty may but occasion the renewal of his sorrows; that the soul who before felt not its own burden at a sermon, or in prayer, or holy meditation, which were wont to revive him, now seems to feel his miseries to be multiplied. The time was once with David, when thoughts of God were sweet to him, and he could say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." And yet he saw the time also when he remembered God and was troubled; he complained, and his spirit was overwhelmed. God so held his eyes waking, that he was troubled and could not speak. He considered the days of old, and the years of ancient time; he called to remembrance his song in the night, he communed with his own heart, and his spirit made diligent search. "Will the

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Lord (saith he) cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercy?" Was not this a low ebb, and a sad case that David was in? Till at last he saw, this was his infirmity; Psal. lxxii. 1—10. Had David no former experiences to remind? No arguments of comfort to consider of? Yes, but there is at such a season an incapacity to improve them. There is not only a want of comfort, but a kind of averseness from it. The soul bendeth itself to break its own peace, and to put away comfort far from it. So saith he in ver. 2. "My soul refused to be comforted." In such cases men are witty to argue themselves into distress; that it is hard for one that would comfort them to answer them; and they are witty in repelling all the arguments of comfort that you can offer them; so that it is hard to fasten any thing on them. They have a weak wilfulness against their own consolations.

Seeing then that the best have such storms and sad interruptions, do not you wonder or think your case strange if it be so with you? Would you speed better than the best? Long for heaven then, where only is joy without sorrow, and everlasting rest without interruption.

Direct. XX. Let me also give you this warning, 'That you must never expect so much assurance on earth, as shall set you above the possibility of the loss of heaven; or above all apprehensions of real danger of your miscarrying.'

I conceive this advertisement to be of great necessity. But I must first tell you the meaning, and then the reasons of it. Only I am sorry that I know not how to express it fully, but in school-terms, which are not so familiar to you. 1. That which shall certainly come to pass, we call a thing future. That which may and can be done we call possible. All things are not future which are possible. God can do more than he hath done or will do. He could have made more worlds, and so more were possible than were future. Moreover a thing is said to be possible, in reference to some power which can accomplish it; whether it be God's power, or angel's, or man's. God hath decreed that none of his elect shall finally or totally fall away and perish; and therefore their so falling and perishing is not future; that is, it is a thing that shall never come to pass. But God

never decreed that it should be utterly impossible, and therefore it still remaineth possible, though it shall never come to pass.

Object. 'But it is said, 'They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.'

Answ. A most comfortable place, which many opposers of election and free grace do in vain seek to obscure. But let me tell you for the right understanding of it, 1. That as I said, possible and impossible are relative terms, and have relation to the power of some agent, as proportioned to the thing to be done. Now this text speaks only of the power of false Christs, and false prophets and the devil by them their power of deceiving is exceeding great, but not great enough to deceive the elect; which is true in two respects, 1. Because the elect are guided and fortified by God's Spirit. 2. Because seducers work not efficiently, but finally, by propounding objects; or by a moral, improper efficiency only. All their seducement cannot force or necessitate us to be deceived by them. But though it be impossible to them to do it, yet it is possible to God to permit (which yet he never will), and so possible for ourselves to be our own deceivers, or to give deceivers strength against us, by a wilful receiving of their poisoned baits. 3. Besides Christ spoke not in Aristotle's school, but among the vulgar, where words must be used in the common sense, or else they will not be understood. And the vulgar use to call that impossible which shall never come to pass.

There is a consequential impossibility of the event, because it is directly impossible that God should be mutable or deceived; even as contingents may be consequentially and accidentally necessary. But in its own nature, alas our apostacy is more than possible.

And indeed when we say that it is possible or impossible for a man to sin or fall away, there is some degree of impropriety in the terms, because possible and impossible are terms properly relating to some power apportioned to a work; but sinning and falling away thereby, are the consequents of impotency, and not the effects of power; except we speak of the natural act, wherein the sin abideth. But this must be borne with, for want of a fitter word to express our meaning by. But I will leave these things

which are not fit for you, and desire you to leave them and overpass them, if you understand them not.

2. I here told you also, that you must not look to be above all apprehension of danger of your miscarrying. The grounds of this are these: 1. Because as is said, our miscarrying remaineth still possible. 2. Because the perfect, certain knowledge of our election, and that we shall not fall away, is proper to God only; we have ourselves but a defective, interrupted assurance of it. 3. The covenant gives us salvation but on condition of our perseverance, and perseverance on condition that we quench not the Spirit, which we shall do if we lose the apprehension of our danger. 4. Accordingly there is a connexion in our assurance, between all the several causes of our salvation, and necessities there-to; whereof the apprehension of danger is one. We are sure we shall be saved, if we be sure to persevere; else not. We are sure to persevere, if we be sure faithfully to resist temptations. We can be no surer of faithful resisting of temptations, than we are sure to be kept in an apprehension of our danger.

I still say therefore, that the doctrine of Antinomians is the most ready way to apostacy and perdition; and no wonder if it lead to licentiousness and scandals, which our eyes have seen to be its genuine fruits! They cry down the weakness, unbelief, and folly of poor Christians, that will apprehend themselves in danger of falling away, and so live in fear, after they are once justified; and that if they fall into sin (as whoredom, drunkenness, murder, perjury, destroying the ministry, and expelling the Gospel, &c.), will presently question or fear their estates and their justification. Such like passages I lately read in some printed sermons of one of my ancient acquaintance, who would never have come to that pass that he is at now, if his judgment and humility had been as great as his zeal. I entreat you therefore never to expect such an assurance as shall extinguish all your apprehensions of danger. He that sees not the danger, is nearest it, and likely to fall into it. Only he that seeth and apprehendeth it, is likely to avoid it. He that seeth no danger of falling away, is in greatest danger of it. I doubt not but that is the cause of the seditions, scandals, heresies, blood-guiltiness, destroyers of the

churches of Christ, and most horrid apostacies, hypocrisy, and wickedness, which these late times have been guilty of; that they apprehended not the danger of ever coming into such a state, or ever doing such things, but would have said, 'Am I a dog?' to him that should have foretold them what is come to pass. Wonderful! that men should be so blinded by false doctrine, as not to know that the apprehension of danger is made in the very fabrication of the nature of man, to be the very engine to move his soul in all ways of self-preservation and salvation! Yea, it is that very supposed principle upon which all the government of the world, and the laws and order of every nation, are grounded. We could not keep the very brutes from tearing us in pieces, but for their own safety, because they apprehend themselves to be in danger by it. The fear of man is it that restraineth them. But for this, no man's life would be in any safety, for every malicious man would be a murderer. He that feareth not the loss of his own life, is master of another man's. Do these men think that the apprehension of bodily dangers may carry them on through all undertakings, and be the potent string of most of their actions, and warrant all those courses that else would be unwarrantable, so that they dare plead necessity to warrant those fearful things which by extenuating language (like Saul's) are called irregularities! And yet that it is unlawful or unmeet for a Christian, yea the weakest Christian, to live in any apprehensions of danger to their souls. Either danger of sinning, or falling away, or perishing for ever? No wonder if such do sin, and fall away and perish. Would these men have fought well by sea or land, if they had apprehended no danger? Would the earth have been so covered with carcasses, and with blood (yea, even of saints) and the world filled with the doleful calamities that accompanied and have followed, if there had been no apprehensions of danger? Would they take physic when they are sick? Would they avoid fire or water, or thieves, but through an apprehension of danger? Let them talk what they please, if ever they escape hell, without a deep apprehension of the danger of it, it must be in a way not known by Scripture, or by nature. Sure I am Paul did tame his body, and bring it into subjection, through an apprehension of this danger, lest when he had preached to others, himself should be a cast-

away or reprobate? 2 Cor. ix. 27. And Christ himself, when he biddeth us "fear not them that can kill the body," (whom yet these men think it lawful to fear and fight against) yet chargeth us with a double charge, to "fear him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell: yea, I say unto you, (saith Christ), fear him;" Luke xii. 5. What can be plainer? and to his disciples? My detestation of these destructive Antinomian principles, makes me to run out further against them than I intended; though it were easy more abundantly to manifest their hatefulness. But my reasons are these:

1. Because the mountebanks are still thrusting in themselves, and impudently proclaiming their own skill, and the excellency of their remedies for the cure of wounded consciences, and the settling of peace; when indeed their receipts are rank poison, gilded with the precious name of Christ, and free grace.
2. Because I would not have your doubtings cured by the devil; for he will but cure one disease with another, and a lesser with a far greater. If he can so cure your fears and doubtings, as to bring you into carnal security and presumption, he will lose nothing by the cure, and you will get nothing. If he can turn a poor, doubting, troubled Christian to be a secure Antinomian, he hath cured the smart of a cut finger by casting them into a lethargy, or stupefaction by his opium. To go to Antinomian receipts to cure a troubled soul, is as going to a witch to cure the body.
3. I would have you sensible of God's goodness to you, in these very troubles that you have so long laid under. Your blessed physician knew your disease, and the temperature of your soul. Perhaps he saw that you were in some danger of being carried away with the honours, profits, or treasures of this world; and would have been entangled in either covetousness, pride, voluptuousness, or some such desperate sin. And now by these constant and extraordinary apprehensions of your danger, these sins have been much kept under, temptations weakened, and your danger prevented. If you have found no such inclinations in yourself, yet God might find them. Had it not been far worse for you to have lain so many years in pride, sensuality, and forgetfulness of God, and utter neglect of the state of your soul, than to have lain so long as you have done in the apprehensions of your danger? O love and admire your wise Physician! Little do you know now

what he hath been doing for you ; nor shall you ever fully know it in this life ; but hereafter you shall know it, when your sanctification, and consolation, and his praises shall be perfected together. 4. If you should for the time to come, expect or desire that God should set you out of all apprehension of danger, you know not what it is that you desire. It were to desire your own undoing. Only see that you apprehend not your danger to be greater than it is ; nor so apprehend it as to increase it, by driving you from Christ, but as to prevent it by driving you to him. Entertain not fancies and dreams of danger, instead of right apprehensions. Apprehend your happiness and grounds of hope and comfort, and safety in Christ, and let these quite exceed your apprehensions of the danger. Look not on it as a remediless danger, or as greater than the remedy. Do not conclude that you shall perish in it, and it will swallow you up. But only let it make you hold fast on Christ, and keep close to him in obedience. Shall I lay open all the matter expressed in this section, by a familiar comparison ?

A king having many subjects and sons, which are all beyond sea, or beyond some river, they must needs be brought over to him before they can live or reign with him. The river is frozen over at the sides, till it come almost to the middle. The foolish children are all playing on the ice, where a deceiving enemy enticeth them to play on till they come to the deep, where they drop in one by one and perish. The eldest son, who is with the father on the other side, undertaketh to cast himself into the water, and swim to the further side, and break the ice, and swim back with them all that will come with him and hold him. The father bids him, ' Bring all my subjects with you, if they will come and hold by you ; but be sure you fail not to bring my sons.' This is resolved on ; the prince casteth himself into the water, and swimmeth to the further side. He maketh a way through the ice, and offereth all of them his safe carriage, if they will accept him to be their bearer and helper, and will trust themselves on him, and hold fast by him till they come to the further side. Some refuse his help, and think he would deceive them, and lead them into the deep, and there leave them to perish. Some had rather play on the ice, and will not hearken to him. Some dare not venture through the streams, or will not endure the coldness of the water,

Some waveringly agree to him, and hold faintly by his skirt; and when they feel the cold water, or are near the deep, or are weary of holding, they lose him; either turning back, or perishing suddenly in the gulf. The children are of the same mind with the rest; but he is resolved to lose none of them, and therefore he chargeth them to come with him, and tells them fully what a welcome they shall have with their father; and ceaseth not his importunity till he persuade them to consent. Some of them say, 'How shall we ever get over the river? we shall be drowned by the way.' He tells them, 'I will carry you safe over, so you will but hold fast by me. Never fear, I warrant you.' They all lay hold on him, and venture in with him. When they are in the midst some are afraid, and cry out, 'We shall be drowned.' These he encourageth, and bids them trust him; hold fast, and fear not. Others, when they hear these words, that they need not fear, they grow so bold and utterly secure, as to lose their hold. To these he speaketh in other language, and chargeth them to hold fast by him; for if they lose their hold, they will fall into the bottom, and if they stick not to him they will be drowned. Some of them upon this warning hold fast; others are so boldly confident of his skill, and good will, and promise, that they forget or value not his warning and threatening, but lose their hold. Some through laziness and weariness do the like. Whereupon he lets them sink till they are almost drowned, and cry out for help, "Save us or we perish," and think they are all lost; and then he layeth hold of them and fetcheth them up again, and chideth them for their bold folly, and biddeth them look better to themselves, and hold faster by him hereafter, if they love themselves. Some at last, through mere weariness and weakness, before they can reach the bank, cry out, 'O I am tired, I faint, I shall never hold fast till I reach the shore, I shall be drowned.' These he comforteth, and gives them cordials, and holdeth them by the hand, and bids them Despair not. Do your best. Hold fast, and I will help you. And so he brings them all safe to the haven.

This king is God; heaven is his habitation; the subjects are all men; the sons, who are part of the subjects, are the elect; the rest are the non-elect; the river or sea is the passage of this life. The further side is all men's natural, sinful distance and separation from God and happiness;

the ice that bears them, is this frail life of pleasures, profits, and honours, which delight the flesh; the depth unfrozen is hell; he that enticeth them thither is the devil. The eldest son that is sent to bring them over, is Jesus Christ; his commission and undertaking is, to help all over that refuse not his help; and to see that the elect be infallibly recovered and saved. Do I need to go over the other particulars? I know you see my meaning in them all: especially that which I aim at is this; that as Paul had a promise of the life of all that were with him in the ship, and yet when some would have gone out, he told them, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. 31. (so that he makes their apprehension of danger in a possibility of being drowned, to be the means of detaining them in the ship till they came all safe to land) so Jesus Christ who will infallibly save all his elect (they being given him by his Father to be infallibly saved) will do it by causing them to hold fast by him, through all the troubles, and labours, and temptations of this tumultuous, tempestuous world, and that till they come to land; and the apprehension of their dangers shall be his means to make them hold fast; yet is not their safety principally in themselves, but in him: nor is it their holding fast by him that is the chief cause of their difference from those that perish, but that is his love and resolution to save them. And therefore when they do let go their hold, he will not so lose them, but will fetch them up again; only he will not bring them through this sea of danger as you would draw a block through the water; but as men that must hold fast, and be commanded and threatened to that end; and therefore when they lose their hold, it is the fear of drowning which they felt themselves near, which shall cause them to hold faster the next time; and this must needs be the fear of a possible danger. And for those that perish, they have none to blame but themselves. They perish not for want of a Saviour, but because they would not lay hold on him, and follow him through the tempests and waves of trial. Nor can they quarrel at him because he did more for others, and did not as much for them as long as he offered them so sufficient help, that only their own wilful refusal was their ruin, and their perdition was of themselves.

I conclude therefore, that seeing our salvation is laid by

God, upon our faithful holding fast to Christ through all trials and difficulties, and our holy fear is the means of our holding fast (Christ being still the principal cause of our safety), therefore never look for such a certainty of salvation, as shall put you above such fears and moderated apprehensions of danger; for then it is ten to one you will lose your hold. You read in Scripture very many warnings to take heed lest we fall, and threatenings to those that do fall away and draw back. What are all these for, but to excite in us those moderate fears, and cares, and holy diligence, which may prevent our falling away? And remember this, that there can be no such holy fears, and cares, and diligence, where there is no danger or possibility of falling away; for there can be no act without its proper object; and the object of fear is a possible hurt, at least in the apprehension of him that feareth it. No man can fear the evil which he knoweth to be impossible.

Direct. XXI. The next advice which I must give you, is this, 'Be thankful if you can but reach to a settled peace, and composure of your mind, and lay not too much on the high raptures and feelings of comfort which some do possess: and if ever you enjoy such feeling joys, expect not that they should be either long or often.'

It is the cause of miserable languishing to many a poor soul, to have such importunate expectations of such passionate joys, that they think without these they have no true comfort at all; no witness of the Spirit, no spirit of adoption, no joy in the Holy Ghost. Some think that others have much of this, though they have not, and therefore they torment themselves because it is not with them as with others; when, alas, they little know how it goes with others. Some taste of such raptures sometimes themselves have had, and therefore when they are gone, they think they are forsaken, and that all grace, or peace at least is gone with them. Take heed of these expectations. And to satisfy you, let me tell you these two or three things: 1. A settled calm and peace of soul is a great mercy, and not to be undervalued as nothing. 2. The highest raptures and passionate feeling joys, are usually of most doubtful sincerity. Not that I would have any suspect the sincerity of them without cause; but such passions are not so certain signs of grace, as the settled frame of the understanding and will; nor can we so

easily know that they are of the Spirit, and they are liable to more questioning, and have in them a greater possibility of deceit. Doubtless it is very much that fancy and melancholy, and especially a natural weakness and moveable temper will do in such cases. Mark whether it be not mostly these three sorts of people that have or pretend to have such extraordinary raptures and feelings of joy. 1. Women and others that are most passionate. 2. Melancholy people. 3. Men that by erroneous opinions have lost almost all their understandings in their fancies, and live like men in a continual dream. Yet I doubt not but solid men have oft high joys; and more we might all have, if we did our duty. And I would have no Christian content himself with a dull quietness of spirit, but by all means possible to be much in labouring to rejoice in God and raising their souls to heavenly delights. O what lives do we lose, which we might enjoy! But my meaning is this: look at these joys and delights as duties and as mercies, but look not at them as marks of trial, so as to place more necessity in them than God hath done, or to think them to be ordinary things. If you do but feel such a high estimation of Christ and heaven, that you would not leave him for all the world, take this for your surest sign. And if you have but so much probability or hope of your interest in him, that you can think of God as one that loveth you, and can be thankful to Christ for redeeming you, and are more glad in these hopes of your interest in Christ and glory, than if you were owner of all the world; take this for a happy mercy, and a high consolation. Yet I mean not that your joy in Christ will be always so sensible, as for worldly things; but it will be more rational, solid and deeper at the heart. And that you may know by this, you would not for all the pleasures, honours or profits in the world, be in the same case as once you were (supposing that you were converted since you had the use of reason and memory), or at least as you see the ungodly world still lie in.

3. And let me add this: commonly those that have the highest passionate joys, have the saddest lives; for they have withal, the most passionate fears and sorrows. Mark it, whether you find not this prove true. And it is partly from God's will in his dispensations; partly from their own necessities, who after their exaltations do usually need a prick in the flesh, and a minister of satan to buffet them, lest

they be exalted above measure ; and partly, and most commonly it is from the temperature of their bodies. Weak, passionate women, of moveable spirits and strong affections when they love, they love violently, and when they rejoice, especially in such cases, they have most sensible joys, and when any fears arise, they have most terrible sorrows. I know it is not so with all of that sex ; but mark the same people that usually have the highest joys, and see whether at other times they have not the greatest troubles. This week they are as at the gates of heaven, and the next as at the doors of hell : I am sure, with many it is so. Yet it need not be so, if Christians would but look at these high joys as duties to be endeavoured, and mercies to be valued ; but when they will needs judge of their state by them, and think that God is gone from them or forsaken them, when they have not such joys, then it leaves them in terror and amazement. Like men after a flash of lightning, that are left more sensible of the darkness. For no wise man can expect that such joys should be a Christian's ordinary state ; or God should so diet us with a continual feast. It would neither suit with our health, nor the condition of this pilgrimage. Live therefore on your peace of conscience as your ordinary diet ; when this is wanting, know that God appointeth you a fast for your health ; and when you have a feast of high joys, feed on it and be thankful ; but when they are taken from you, gape not after them as the disciples did after Christ at his ascension ; but return thankfully to your ordinary diet of peace. And remember that these joys, which are now taken from you, may so return again. However, there is a place preparing for you, where your joys shall be full.

Direct. XXII. My next Direction is this, 'Spend more of your time and care about your duty than about your comforts ; and for the exercise and increase of your graces, than for the discovery of them : and when you have done all that you can for assurance and comfort, you shall find that it will very much depend on your actual obedience.'

This Direction is of as great importance as any that I have yet given you ; but I shall say but little of it, because I have spoke of it so fully already in my Book of Rest, Part iii. Chap. 8—11. My reasons for what I here assert are these : 1. Duty goeth in order of nature and time, before

comfort, as the precept is before the promise : comfort is part of the reward, and therefore necessarily supposeth the duty. 2. Grace makes men both so ingenious and divine, as to consider God's due as well as their own ; and what they should do, as well as what they shall have, still remembering that our works cannot merit at God's hands. 3. As we must have grace before we can know we have it, so ordinarily we must have a good measure of grace, before we can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it. Small things, I have told you, are next to none, and hardly discernible by weak eyes. When all ways in the world are tried, it will be found that there is no way so sure for a doubting soul to be made certain of the truth of his graces, as to keep them in action, and get them increased. And it will be found that there is no one cause of Christians doubting of the truth of their faith, love, hope, repentance, humility, &c. so great or so common as the small degree of these graces. Doth not the very language of complaining Christians shew this ? One saith, 'I have no faith ; I cannot believe ; I have no love to God ; I have no delight in duty.' Another saith, 'I cannot mourn for sin, my heart was never broken ; I cannot patiently bear an injury ; I have no courage in opposing sin, &c.' If all these were not in a low and weak degree, men could not so ordinarily think they had none. A lively, strong, working faith, love, zeal, courage, &c. would shew themselves, as do the highest towers, the greatest mountains, the strongest winds, the greatest flames, which will force an observance by their greatness and effects. 4. Consider also that it is more pleasing to God to see his people study him and his will directly, than to spend the first and chiefest of their studies about the attaining of comforts to themselves. 5. And it is the nature of grace to tend first and chiefly toward God ; and but secondarily to be the evidence of our own happiness. We have faith given us principally that we might believe, and live by it in daily applications of Christ : we have repentance, that it might break us off from sin, and bring us back to God ; we have love, that we might love God and our Redeemer, his saints, and laws, and ways ; we have zeal, that we might be quickened in all our holy duties ; and we have obedience, to keep us in the way of duty. The first thing we have to do with these graces, is to use them for those

holy ends which their nature doth express: and then the discerning of them that we may have assurance, followeth after this both in time and dignity. 6. And it is a matter of far greater concernment to ourselves to seek after the obtaining of Christ and grace, than after the certain knowledge that we have them. You may be saved though you never get assurance here, but you cannot be saved without Christ and grace. God hath not made assurance the condition of your salvation. It tends indeed exceedingly to your comfort, and a precious mercy it is; but your safety lieth not on it. It is better to go sorrowful and doubting to heaven, than comfortably to hell. First therefore ask what is the condition of salvation and the way to it, and then look that you do your best to perform it, and to go that way, and then try your performance in its season. 7. Besides, as it is a work of far greater moment, so also of quicker dispatch, to believe and love Christ truly, than to get assurance that you do truly believe and love him. You may believe immediately, (by the help of God's grace,) but getting assurance of it may be the work of a great part of your life. Let me therefore entreat this one thing of you, that when you feel the want of any grace, you would not presently bend all your thoughts upon the inquiry, whether it be true or no; but rather say to yourself, 'I see trying is a great and difficult, a long and tedious work: I may be this many years about it, and possibly be unresolved still. If I should conclude that I have no grace, I may be mistaken; and so I may if I think that I have it. I may inquire of friends and ministers long, and yet be left in doubt; it is therefore my surest way to seek presently to obtain it, if I have it not, and to increase it if I have it. And I am certain none of that labour will be lost; to get more is the way to know I have it.'

But perhaps you will say, 'How should I get more grace? That is a business of greater difficulty than so.' I answer, Understand what I told you before, that as the beginning of grace is in your understanding, so the heart and life of it is in your will; and the affections and passionate part are but the fruits and branches. If therefore your grace be weak, it is chiefly in an unwillingness to yield to Christ, and his word and Spirit. Now, how should an unwilling soul be made willing? Why thus, 1. Pray constantly as you are able, for a willing mind, and yielding, inclinable heart to

Christ. 2. Hear constantly those preachers that bend their doctrine to inform your understanding of the great necessity and excellency of Christ, and grace, and glory; and to persuade the will with the most forcible arguments. A persuading, quickening ministry, that helps to excite your graces, and draw up your heart to Christ, is more useful than they that spend most of their time to persuade you of your sincerity, and give you comfort. 3. But especially lay out your thoughts more in the most serious considerations of those things which tend to breed and feed those particular graces which you would have increased. Objects and moving reasons kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great engine appointed both by nature and by grace, to turn about the soul of man. Thoughts are to your soul, as taking in the air, and meat and drink to your body. Objects considered, do turn the soul into their own nature. Such as are the things that you most think and consider of (I mean in pursuance of them), such will you be yourself. Consideration, frequent serious consideration, is God's great instrument to convert the soul, and to confirm it; to get grace, and to keep it, and increase it. If any soul perish for want of grace, it is ten to one it is mainly for want of frequent and serious consideration. That the most of us do languish under such weaknesses, and attain to small degrees of grace, is for want of sober, frequent consideration. We know not how great things this would do, if it were but faithfully managed. This then is my advice, when you feel so great a want of faith and love (for those be the main graces for trial and use,) that you doubt whether you have any or none, lay by those doubting thoughts awhile, and presently go and set yourself to consider of God's truth, goodness, amiableness, and kindheartedness to miserable, unworthy sinners: think what he is in himself, and what he is to you, and what he hath done for you, and what he will do for you if you do but consent. And then think of the vanity of all the childish pleasures of this world; how soon, and in how sad a case they will leave us; and what silly, contemptible things they are, in comparison of the everlasting glory of the saints! By that time you have warmed your soul a little with such serious thoughts, you will find your faith and love revive, and begin to stir and work within you; and then you will feel that you have faith and love.

Only remember what I told you before, that the heart and soul of saving faith and love (supposing a belief that the Gospel is true,) is all in this one act of willingness and consent to have Christ as he is offered. Therefore if you doubt of your faith and love, it is your own willingness that you doubt of, or else you know not what you do. Now methinks, if you took but a sober view of the goodness of God, and the glory of heaven on one side, and of the silly, empty, worthless world on the other side; and then ask your heart which it will choose; and say to yourself, 'O my soul, the God of glory offers thee thy choice of dung and vanity for a little time, or of the unconceivable joys of heaven for ever: which wilt thou choose?' I say, methinks the answer of your own soul should presently resolve you, that you do believe, and that you love God above this present world! For if you can choose him before the world, then you are more willing of him than the world: and if he have more of your will, for certain he hath more of your faith and love. Use, therefore, instead of doubting of your faith, to believe till you put it out of doubt. And if yet you doubt, study God, and Christ, and glory yet better, and keep those objects by consideration close to your heart, whose nature is to work the heart to faith and love. For certainly objects have a mighty power on the soul; and certainly God, and Christ, and grace, and glory, are mighty objects; as able to make a full and deep impression on man's soul, as any in the world; and if they work not, it is not through any imperfection in them, but because they be not well applied, and by consideration held upon the heart, that they may work. Perhaps you will say, that meditation is too hard a work for you, and that your memory is so weak that you want matter to meditate upon; or if you do meditate on these, yet you feel no great motion or alteration on your heart. To this I answer; if you want matter, take the help of some book that will afford you matter; and if you want life in meditation, peruse the most quickening writings you can get. If you have not better at hand, read over (and seriously consider as you read it,) those passages in the end of my Book of Rest, which direct you in the exercises of these graces, and give you some matter for your meditation to work upon: and remember, that if you can increase the re-

solved choice of your will, you increase your love, though you feel not those affectionate workings that you desire.

Let me ask you now whether you have indeed taken this course in your doubtings? If not, how unwisely have you done. Doubting is no cure, but actual believing and loving is a cure. If faith and love were things that you would fain get, but cannot, then you had cause enough to fear, and to lie down and rise in trouble of mind from one year to another. But it is no such matter; it is so far from being beyond your reach or power to have these graces, though you would, that they themselves are nothing else but your very willingness; at least your willingness to have Christ, is both your faith and love. It may be said therefore to be in the power of your will, which is nothing else but that actual willingness which you have already. If therefore you are unwilling to have him, what makes you complain for want of the sense of his presence, and the assurance of his love, and the graces of his Spirit, as you frequently do? It is strange to me, that people should make so many complaints to God and men, and spend so many sad hours in fears and trouble, and all for want of that which they would not have. If you be not willing, be willing now. If you say you cannot, do as I have before directed you. One hour's sober, serious thoughts of God and the world, of Christ and satan, of sin and holiness, of heaven and hell, and the differences of them, will do very much to make you willing. Yet mistake me not; though I say you may have Christ if you will, and faith and love if you will, and no man can truly say, 'I would be glad to have Christ (as he is offered) but cannot;' yet this gladness, consent, or willingness which I mention, is the effect of the special work of the Spirit, and was not in your power before you had it; nor is it yet so in your power as to believe, without God's further help. But he that hath made you willing, will not be wanting to maintain your willingness. Though I will say to any man, You may have Christ if you will; yet I will say to no man, You can be willing of yourself, or without the special grace of God.

Nay, let me further ask; Have not you darkened, buried, or weakened your graces, instead of exercising and increasing them, even then when you complained for want of

assurance of them? When you found a want of faith and love, have not you weakened them more, and so made them less discernible? Have you not fed your unbelief, and disputed for your doubtings, and taken satan's part against yourself; and (which is far worse) have you never, through these doubtings, entertained hard thoughts of God, and presented him to your soul, as unwilling to shew you mercy, and in an unlovely, dreadful, hideous shape, fitter to affright you from him, than to draw you to him and likelier to provoke your hatred than your love? If you have not done thus, I know too many troubled souls that have. And if you have, you have taken a very unlikely way to get assurance. If you would have been certain that you loved God in sincerity, you should have laboured to love him more, till you had been certain; and that you might do so, you should have kept better thoughts of God in your mind. You will hardly love him while you think of him as evil, or at least as hurtful to you. Never forget this rule which I laid you down in the beginning, that, He that will ever love God, must apprehend him to be good. And the more large and deep are our apprehensions of his goodness, the more will be our love. For such as God appears to be to men's fixed conceivings, such will their affections be to him. For the fixed, deep conceptions, or apprehensions of the mind, do lead about the soul, and guide the life.

I conclude therefore with this important and importunate request to you, that, Though it be a duty necessary in its time and place, to examine ourselves concerning our sincerity, in our several graces and duties to God; yet be sure that the first and far greater part of your time, and pains, and care, and inquiries, be for the getting and increasing of your grace, than for the discerning it; and to perform your duty rightly, than to discern your right performance. And when you confer with ministers, or others, that may teach you, see that you ask ten times at least, 'How should I get or increase my faith, my love to Christ, and to his people?' For once that you ask, 'How shall I know that I believe or love?' Yet so contrary hath been, and still is, the practice of most Christians among us in this point, that I have heard it twenty times asked, 'How shall I know that I truly love the brethren?' For once that I have heard it demanded, 'How should I bring my heart to

love them better?' And the like I may say of love to Christ himself.

I should next have spoke of the second part of the Direction, How much our assurance and comfort will still depend on our actual obedience. But this will fall in in handling the two or three next following Directions.

Direct. XXIII. My next advice is this, 'Think not those doubts and troubles of mind, which are caused and continued by wilful disobedience, will ever be well healed but by the healing of that disobedience; or that the same means must be used, and will suffice to the cure of such troubles; which must be used, and will suffice to cure the troubles of a tender conscience, and of an obedient Christian, whose trouble is merely through mistakes of their condition.'

I will begin with the latter part of this Direction. He that is troubled upon mere mistakes, may be quieted upon the removal of them. If he understood not the universal extent of Christ's satisfaction, or of the covenant or conditional grant of Christ and life in him; and if upon this he be troubled, as thinking that he is not included, the convincing him of his error may suffice to the removal of his trouble. If he be troubled through his mistaking the nature of true faith, or true love, or other graces, and so think that he hath them not, when he hath them, the discovery of his error may be the quieting of his soul. The soul that is troubled upon such mistakes, must be tenderly dealt with. Much more they that are disquieted by groundless fears, or too deep apprehensions of the wrath or justice of God, of the evil of sin, and of their unworthiness, and for want of fuller apprehensions of the lovingkindness of God, and the tender, compassionate nature of Christ. We can scarce handle such souls too gently. God would have all to be tenderly dealt with, that are tender of displeasing and dishonouring him by sin. God's own language may teach all ministers what language we should use to such, Isa. lvii. 15—21. "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath. For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, &c. But the

wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Much more tender language may such expect from Christ in the Gospel, where is contained a fuller revelation of his grace. If Mary, a poor, sinful woman, lie weeping at his feet, and washing them with her tears, he hath not the heart to spurn her away; but openly proclaims the forgiveness of her many sins. As soon as ever the heart of a sinner is turned from his sins, the heart of Christ is turned to him. The very sum of all the Gospel is contained in those precious words, which fully express this: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;" Matt. xi. 28—30. When the prodigal (Luke xi. 20.), doth once come home to his father, with sorrow and shame, confessing his unworthiness, yea, but resolved to confess it; his father preventeth him, and sees him afar off, and stays not his coming, but runs and meets him. And when he comes to him, he doth not upbraid him with his sins, nor say, Thou rebel, why hast thou forsaken me, and preferred harlots and luxury before me? Nay, he doth not so much as frown upon him, but compassionately falls on his neck and kisseth him. Alas, God knows that a poor sinner in this humbled, troubled case, hath burden enough on his back already, and indeed more than he is able of himself to bear. The sense of his own sinful folly and misery is burden enough. If God should add to this his frowns and terrors, and should spurn at a poor sinner that lies prostrate at his feet, in tears or terrors, who then should be able to stand before him, or to look him in the face? But he will not break the bruised reed; he will not make heavier the burden of a sinner. He calls them to come to him for ease and rest, and not to oppress them, or kill them with terrors. We have not a king like Rehoboam, that will multiply our pressures; but one whose office it is to break our yokes, and loose our bonds, and set us free. When he was a preacher himself on earth, you may gather what doctrine he preached by his text, which he chose at one of his first public sermons; which, as you may find in Luke iv. 18, 19. was this, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;

he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted ; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." O if a poor, bruised, wounded soul, had but heard this sermon from his Saviour's own mouth, what heart-meltings would it have caused ? What pangs of love would it have raised in him ? You would sure have believed then that the Lord is gracious, when "all (that heard him) bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth ;" Luke iv. 22. I would desire no more for the comfort of such a soul, than to see such a sight, and feel such a feeling as the poor penitent prodigal did, when he found himself in the arms of his father, and felt the kisses of his mouth, and was surprised so unexpectedly with such a torrent of love. The soul that hath once seen and felt this, would never sure have such hard and doubtful thoughts of God, except through ignorance they knew not whose arms they were that thus embraced them, or whose voice it was that thus bespoke them ; or unless the remembrance of it were gone out of their minds. You see then what is God's own language to humbled penitents, and what is the method of his dealings with them ; and such must be the language and dealing of his ministers : they must not wound when Christ would heal ; nor make sad the heart that Christ would comfort, and would not have made sad ; Ezek. xiii. 22.

But will this means serve turn, or must the same course be taken to remove the sorrows of the wilfully disobedient ? No : God takes another course himself, and prescribes another course to his ministers ; and requires another course from the sinner himself. But still remember who it is that I speak of : it is not the ordinary, unavoidable infirmities of the saints that I speak of ; such as they cannot be rid of, though they fain would ; such as Paul speaks of, Rom. vii. 19. "The good that I would do, I do not : " and "when I would do good, evil is present with me." And Gal. v. 17. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, &c. so that we cannot do the things that we would." A true Christian would love God more perfectly, and delight in him more abundantly, and bring every thought in subjection to his will, and subdue the very remnants of carnal concupiscence, that there should be no stirrings of lust or unjust anger, or world-

ly desires, or pride within him; and that no vain word might pass his lips: all this he would do, but he cannot. Striving against these unavoidable infirmities, is conquering.

But though we cannot keep under every motion of concupiscence, we can forbear the execution. Anger will stir upon provocations; but we may restrain it in degree, that it set us not in a flame, and do not much distemper or discompose our minds. And we can forbid our tongues all raging, furious, or abusive words in our anger; all cursing, swearing, or reproachful speaking. If an envious thought against one brother do arise in our hearts, because he is preferred before us, we may hate it and repress it, and chide our hearts for it, and command our tongues to speak well of him, and no evil. Some pride and self-esteem will remain and be stirring in us, do what we can, it is a sin so deeply rooted in our corrupt natures. But yet we can detest it, and resist it, and meet with abhorrence of our self-conceited thoughts, and rejoicings in our own reputations and fame, and inward heart-risings against those that undervalue us, and stand in the way of our repute; and we may forbear our boasting language, and our contestings for our credit, and our excuses of our sins, and our backbitings and secret defaming of those that cross us in the way of credit. We may forbear our quarrels, and estrangements, and dividings from our brethren, and stiff insisting on our own conceits, and expecting that others should make our judgments their rule, and say and do as we would have them, and all dance after our pipe; all which are the effects of inward pride. We cannot, while we are on earth, be free from all inordinate love of the world, and the riches and honours of it; but we may so watch against it and repress it, as that it shall neither be preferred before God, nor draw us to unlawful ways of gain, by lying, deceit, and overreaching our brethren; by stealing, unjust or unmerciful dealings, oppressing the poor, and insulting over those that are in the way of our thriving, and crushing them that would hinder our aspiring designs, and treading them down that will not bow to us, and taking revenge of them that have crossed or disparaged us, or cruelly exacting all our rights and debts of the poor, and squeezing the purses of subjects or tenants, or those that we bargain with, like a sponge, as long as any thing will come out. Yea, we may so far subdue our love of the world, as

that it shall not hinder us from being merciful to the poor, compassionate to our servants and labourers, and bountiful to our power in doing good works; nor yet shut out God's service from our families and closets; nor rob him of our frequent, affectionate thoughts, especially on the Lord's day. So for sensuality, or the pleasing of our flesh more immediately; we shall never on earth be wholly freed from inordinate motions, and temptations, and fleshly desires, and urgent inclinations and solicitations to forbidden things. But yet we may restrain our appetite by reason, so far that it brings us not to gluttony and drunkenness, and a studying for our bellies, and pampering of our flesh, or a taking care for it, and making provision to satisfy its lusts; Rom. xiii. 14. We may forbear the obeying it, in excess of apparel, in indecent, scandalous, or time-wasting recreations, in uncleanness, or unchaste speeches or behaviour, or the reading of amorous books and sonnets, or feeding our eyes or thoughts on filthy or enticing objects, or otherwise wilfully blowing the fire of lust. So also for the performance of duty. We shall never in this life be able to hear or read so diligently, and understandingly, or affectionately, as we would do; nor to remember or profit by what we hear, as we desire. But yet we can bring ourselves to the congregation, and not prefer our ease, or business, or any vain thing before God's word and worship, or loathe or despise it, because of some weakness in the speaker. And we may in a great measure restrain our thoughts from wandering, and force ourselves to attend; and labour when we come home to recal it to mind. We cannot call on God so fervently, believingly, or delightfully, as we would; but yet we may do it as sincerely as we can, and do it constantly. We cannot instruct our children and servants, and reprove or exhort our neighbours, with that boldness, or love, and compassion, and discretion, and meet expressions, as we would; but yet we may do it faithfully and frequently as we are able.

So that you may see in all this, what sin it is that Paul speaks of, Rom. vii. when he saith, When he would do good, evil is present with him; and that he is led captive to the law of sin, and serves the law of sin with his flesh. And Gal. iv. 17. when he saith, "We cannot do the things that we would," he speaks not of wilful sinning or gross sin, but

of unavoidable infirmities; whereby also we are too often drawn into a committing of many sins which we might avoid (for so the best do).

And because you may often read and hear of sins of infirmity, as distinguished from other sins, let me here give you notice, that this word may be taken in several senses, and that there are three several sorts of infirmity in the godly.

1. There are those sins which a man cannot avoid though he would; which are in the gentlest sense called sins of infirmity. Here note, 1. That Adam had none such. 2. And that the reason of them is, because, 1. Our reason which should direct, and our wills themselves which should command, are both imperfect. 2. And our faculties that should be commanded and directed, are by sin grown impotent and obstinate, and have contracted a rebelling, disobedient disposition. 3. And that degree of grace, which the best attain to in this life, is not such as wholly to overcome either the imperfection of the guiding and commanding faculty, or the rebellion of the obeying faculties: otherwise if our own wills were perfect, and the rebellion of the inferior faculties cured, no man could then say, 'The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do.' For the will would so fully command, that all would obey, and itself being perfect, all would be perfect. And therefore in heaven it is and will be so.

I know philosophers conclude, that all acts of the inferior faculties are but acts commanded by the will; it should be so I confess. It is the office of the will to command, and the understanding to direct, and the rest to obey. But in our state of sinful imperfection, the soul is so distempered and corrupted, that the will cannot fully rule those faculties that it should rule; so that it may be said, 'I would forbear sin, but cannot.' For, 1. The understanding is become a dark, imperfect director. 2. The will is become an imperfect receiver of the understanding's directions; yea, an opposer, as being tainted with the neighbourhood of a distempered sense. 3. When the will is rectified by grace, it is but in part; and therefore when Paul, or any holy man saith, 'I would do good,' and 'I would not do evil,' they mean it not of a perfect willingness, but of a sincere; to wit, that this is the main bent of their will, and the resolved prevalent act of it is for good. 4. When the will doth com-

mand, yet the commanded faculties do refuse to obey, through an unfitness of impotency and corruption. 1. The will hath but an imperfect command of the understanding. (I mean as to the exercise of the act, in which respect it commandeth it, and not as to the specification of the act.) A man may truly and strongly desire to know more, and apprehend things more clearly, and yet cannot. 2. The will hath but an imperfect command of the fancy or thoughts; so that a man may truly say, 'I would think more frequently, more intensely, and more orderly of good, and less of vanity, and yet I cannot.' For objects and passions may force the fancy and cogitations in some degree. 3. The will hath but an imperfect command of the passions; so that a man may truly say, 'I would not be troubled, or afraid, or grieved, or disquieted, or angry, but I cannot choose, and I would mourn more for sin, and be more afraid of sinning, and of God's displeasure, and more zealous for God, and more delighted in him, and joy more in holy things, but I cannot.' For these passions lie so open to the assault of objects, (having the senses for their inlet, and the moveable spirits for their seat or instruments) that even when the will commands them one way, an object may force them in part against the will's command, as we find sensibly in cases of fear, and sorrow or anger, which we can force a man to whether he will or no. And if there be no contradicting object, yet cannot the will excite these passions to what height it shall command; for their motion depends as much (and more) on the lively manner of representing the object, and the working nature and weight of the object represented, and upon the heat and mobility of the spirits, and temperature of the body, as upon the command of the will. 4. Much less can the will command out all vicious habits, and sensual or corrupt inclinations; and therefore a true Christian may well say in respect of these, that he would be more holy, heavenly, and disposed to good, and less to evil, but he cannot. 5. As for complacency and displacency, liking or disliking, love and hatred, so far as they are passions, I have spoke of them before: but so far as they are the immediate acts of the will (willing and nilling) they are not properly said to be commanded by it, but elicited, or acted by it; (wherein, how far it hath power is a most noble ques-

tion, but unfit for this place or your capacity.) And thus you see that there are many acts of the soul, beside habits, which the will cannot now perfectly command, and so a Christian cannot be what he would be, nor do the things that he would. And these are the first sort of sins of infirmity.

If you say, 'Sure these can be no sins, because we are not willing of them, and there is no more sin than there is will in it;' I answer, 1. We were in Adam willing of that sin which caused them. 2. We are in some degree inclining in our wills to sin, though God have that prevalent part and determination, which in comparative cases doth denominate them. 3. The understanding and will may be most heinously guilty where they do not consent, in that they do not more strongly dissent, and more potently and rulingly command all the subject faculties; and so a negation of the will's act, or of such a degree of it as is necessary to the regiment of the sensual part, is a deep guilt and great offence; and it may be said, that there is will in this sin. It is morally or reputatively voluntary, though not naturally; because the will doth not its office when it should: as a man is guilty of voluntary murder of his own child, that stands by and seeth his servant kill him, and doth not do his best to hinder him. I would this were better understood by some divines; for I think that the commonest guilt of the reason and will in our actual sins, is by omission of the exercise of their authority to hinder it; and that most sins are more brutish, as to the true efficient cause, than many imagine; and yet they are human or moral acts too, and the soul nevertheless guilty; because the commanding faculties performed not their office, and so are the moral or imputative causes, and so the great culpable causes of the fact. But I am drawn nearer to philosophy and points beyond your reach than I intended; a fault that I must be still resisting in all my writings, being upon every occurring difficulty carried to forget my subject, and the capacity of the meanest to whom I write: but what you understand not, pass over, and go to the next.

The second kind of sins of infirmity, are, The smaller sort of sins, which we may forbear if we will; that is, If we be actually, though not perfectly, yet prevalently willing; or if our will be determined to forbear them; or if the chief

part of the will actually be for such forbearance. The first sort are called sins of infirmity in an absolute sense. These last, I call sins of infirmity in both an absolute and comparative sense : that is, both as they proceed from our inward corruption, which through the weakness of the soul having but little grace, is not fully restrained, and also as it is compared with gross sins : and so we may call idle words, and rash expressions in our haste, and such like, sins of infirmity, in comparison of murder, perjury, or the like gross sins, which we commonly call crimes or wickedness, when the former we use to call but faults. These infirmities are they which the Papists (and some learned divines of our own, as Rob. Baronius in his excellent tractate "*De peccat. Mortali et Veniali*,") do call venial sins ; some of them in a fair and honest sense, viz. Because they are such sins as a true Christian may live and die in, though not unrepented or unresisted, yet not subdued so far as to forsake or cease from the practice of them, and yet they are pardoned. But other Papists call them venial sins in a wicked sense, as if they needed no pardon, and deserved not eternal punishment. (And why should they call them venial if they need not pardon ?) A justified man liveth in the daily practice of some vain thoughts, or the frequent commission of some other sins, which by his utmost diligence he might restrain ; but he liveth not in the frequent practice of adultery, drunkenness, falsewitnessing, slandering, hating his brother, &c.

Yet observe, that though the forementioned lesser sins are called infirmities, in regard of the matter of them, yet they may be so committed in regard of the end and manner of them, as may make them crimes or gross sins. As for example, if one should use idle words wilfully, resolvedly, without restraint, reluctance or tenderness of conscience, this were gross sinning ; or the nearer it comes to this, and the more wilfulness, or neglect, or evil ends there is in the smallest forbidden action, the worse it is, and the grosser. And observe (of which more anon) that the true bounds or difference between gross sins, and those lesser faults, which we call infirmities, cannot be given ; (I think by any man, I am sure not by me,) either as to the act itself, to say, just what acts are gross sins, and what not ; or else as to the manner of committing them ; as to say, just how much of the will must go to make a gross sin ; or just how far a man may

proceed in the degree of evil intents ; or how far in the frequency of sinning, before it must be called a gross sin.

3. The third sort of sins, which may be called sins of infirmity, are these last mentioned gross sins themselves, so far as they are found in the regenerate : these are gross sins put in opposition to the former sort of infirmities ; but our divines use to call them all sins of infirmity, in opposition to the sins of unbelievers, who are utterly unholy. And they call them sins of infirmity, 1. Because the person that committeth them is not dead in sins, as the unregenerate are, but only diseased, wounded and infirm. 2. Because that they are not committed with so full consent of will, as those of the unregenerate are ; but only after much striving, or at least contrary to habitual resolutions, though not against actual.

Here we are in very great difficulties, and full of controversies : some say, that these gross sins do extinguish true grace, and are inconsistent with it : and that David and Peter were out of the state of grace till they did again repent. Others say, that they were in the state of grace, and not at all so liable to condemnation, but that if they had died in the act, they had been saved, because “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ;” and that therefore all the sins of believers are alike sins of infirmity, pardoned on the same terms : and therefore as a rash word may be pardoned without a particular repentance, so possibly may these gross sins. To others this seems dangerous and contrary to Scripture, and therefore they would fain find out a way between both ; but how to do it clearly and satisfactorily is not easy (at least to me, who have been long upon it, but am yet much in the dark in it). I think it is plain that such persons are not totally unsanctified by their sin ; I believe that Christ’s interest is habitually more in their wills than is the interest of the flesh or world, at that very time when they are sinning, and so Christ’s interest is least as to their actual willing ; and so sin prevaieth for that time against the act of their faith and love, but not wholly against the prevalent part of the habit. And therefore when the shaking wind of that stormy temptation is over, the soul will return to Christ by repentance, love and renewed obedience. But then to know what state he is relatively in this while, as to his justification, and reconciliation, and

right to glory, is the point of exceeding difficulty. Whether as we distinguish of habitual faith, and love, and obedience, which he hath not lost; and actual, which he hath lost; so we must make some answerable distinction of justification (habitual and actual it cannot be) into virtual justification which he hath not lost, and actual justification which he hath lost: or into plenary justification (which he hath not) and imperfect justification, wanting a further act to make it plenary (which may remain). But still it will be more difficult to shew punctually what this imperfect or virtual justification is: and most difficult to shew, whether with the loss of actual plenary justification, and the loss of a plenary right to heaven, a man's salvation may consist; that is, whether if he should die in that condition, he should be saved or condemned? Or if it be said, that he shall certainly repent, 1. Yet such a supposition may be put, while he yet repenteth not; for the inquiry into his state, how far there is any intercession of his justification, pardon, adoption or right to salvation? 2. And whether it can fully be proved that it is impossible (or that which never was or shall be) for a regenerate man to die in the very act of a gross sin (as self-murder or the like)? For my part I think God hath purposely left us here in the dark, that we may not be too bold in sinning, but may know that whether the gross sins of believers be such as destroy their justification and the right to glory, prevalently or not, yet certainly they leave them in the dark, as to any certainty of their justification or salvation.

And then more dark is it and impossible to discover, how far a man may go in these grosser sins, and yet have the prevalent habits of grace. As to the former question about the intercession of justification, I am somewhat inclinable to think, that the habit of faith hath more to do in our justification than I have formerly thought, and may as properly be said to be the condition as the act: and that as long as a man is (in a prevalent degree) habitually a believer, he is not only imperfectly and virtually justified, but so far actually justified, that he should be saved, though he were cut off before he actually repent: and that he being already habitually penitent, having a hatred of all sin as sin, should be saved if mere want of opportunity do prevent the act: and that only those sins do bring a man into a

state of condemnation, prove him in such, which consist not with the habitual preeminence of Christ's interest in our souls, above the interest of the flesh and world; and that David's and Peter's were such as did consist with the preeminence of Christ's interest in the habit. But withal, that such gross sins must needs be observable, and so the soul that is guilty doth ordinarily know its guilt, yea, and think of it: and that it is inconsistent with this habitual repentance, not to repent actually as soon as time is afforded, and the violence of passion so far allayed, as that the soul may recollect itself, and reason have its free use: and that he that hath this leisure and opportunity for the free use of reason, and yet doth not repent, it is a sign that the interest of the flesh is habitually as well as actually stronger than Christ's interest in him. I say, in this doubtful case, I am most inclining to judge thus: but as I would have no man take this as my resolved judgment, much less a certain truth, and least of all, to venture on sin and impenitency ever the more for such a doubtful opinion, which doth not conclude him to be certainly unjustified; so I am utterly ignorant both how long sensual passions may possibly rage, and keep the soul from sober consideration; or how far they may interpose in the very time of consideration, and frustrate it, and prevail against it, and so keep the sinner from actual repenting, or at least, from a full ingenuous acknowledgment and bewailing of the sin, which is necessary to full repentance; and how long repentance may be so far stifled, as to remain only in some inward grudgings of conscience, and trouble of mind, hindered from breaking out into free confession (which seemeth to have been David's case long). Nay, it is impossible to know just how long a man may live in the very practice of such gross sin, before Christ's habitual interest above the flesh be either overthrown, or proved not to be there; and how oft a man that hath true grace may commit such sins: these things are undiscernible, besides that none can punctually define a gross sin, so as to exclude every degree of infirmities, and include every degree of such gross sin.

Perhaps you will marvel why I run so far in this point: it is both to give you as much light as I can, what sins they be which be to be called infirmities, and so what sins they be that do forbid that gentle, comforting way of cure, when

the soul is troubled for them, which must be used with those that are troubled more than needs, or upon mistakes ; and also to convince you of this weighty truth, That our comfort, yea, and assurance, hath a great dependance on our actual obedience : yea, so great, that the least obedient sort of sincere Christians cannot by ordinary means have any assurance : and the most obedient (if other necessities concur) will have the most assurance : and for the middle sort, their assurance will rise or fall, ordinarily with their obedience, so that there is no way to comfort such offending Christians, but by reducing them to fuller obedience by faith and repentance, that so the evidences of their justification may be clear, and the great impediments of their assurance and comfort be removed.

This I will yet make clearer to you by its reasons, and then tell you how to apply it to yourself.

1. No man can be sure of his salvation or justification, but he that is sure of his true faith and love. And no man can be sure of his true faith and love, but he that is sure of the sincerity of his obedience. For true faith doth ever take God for our great Sovereign, and Christ for our Lord Redeemer, and containeth a covenant-delivery of a man's self to God and the Redeemer, to be ruled by him, as a subject, child, servant and spouse. This is not done sincerely and savingly, unless there be an actual and habitual resolution to obey God and the Redeemer, before all creatures, and against all temptations that would draw us from him. To obey Christ a little and the flesh more, is no true obedience : if the flesh can do more with us to draw us to sin, than faith and obedience do to keep us from sin, ordinarily, this is no true faith or obedience. If Christ have not the sovereignty in the soul, and his interest be not the most predominant and potent, we are no true believers. Now it is plain, that the interest of the world and flesh doth actually prevail, when a man is actually committing a known sin, and omitting a known duty ; and then it is certain that habits are known but by the acts. And therefore it must needs be that the soul that most sinneth, must needs be most in doubt whether the interest of Christ or the flesh be predominant, and so whether his obedience be true or no ; and so whether he did sincerely take Christ for his Sovereign : and that is, whether he be a true believer ; for when

a man is inquiring into the state of his soul, Whether he do subject himself to Christ as his only Sovereign ; and whether the authority and love of Christ will do more with him, than the temptations of the world, flesh and devil : he hath no way to be resolved but by feeling the pulse of his own will. And if he say, ' I am willing to obey Christ before the flesh,' and yet do actually live in an obedience to the flesh before Christ, he is deceived in his own will ; for this is no saving willingness. A wicked man may have some will to obey Christ principally ; but having more will to the contrary, viz. to please the flesh before Christ, therefore he is wicked still ; so that you see in our self-examination, the business is for the most part finally resolved into our sincere actual obedience. For thus we proceed : we first find, He that believeth and loveth Christ sincerely, shall be saved. Then we proceed, He that believeth sincerely taketh Christ for his Sovereign. Then, He that truly taketh Christ for his Sovereign, doth truly resolve to obey him and his laws, before the world, flesh or devil. Then, He that truly resolveth thus to obey Christ before all, doth sincerely perform his resolution, and doth so obey him. For that is no true resolution ordinarily, that never comes to performance. And here we are cast unavoidably to try whether we do perform our resolutions by actual obedience, before we can sit down with settled peace ; much more before we get assurance. Now those that are diligent and careful in obeying, and have greatest conquest over their corruptions, and do most seldom yield to temptations, but do most notably and frequently conquer them, these have the clearest discovery of the performance of their resolutions by obedience, and consequently the fullest assurance : but they that are oftenest overcome by temptations, and yield most to sin, and live most disobediently, must needs be furthest from assurance of the sincerity of their obedience, and consequently of their salvation.

2. God himself hath plainly made our actual obedience, not only a sign of a true faith, but a secondary part of the condition of our salvation, as promised in the new covenant. And therefore it is as impossible to be saved without it, as without faith, supposing that the person have opportunity to obey, in which case only it is made necessary, as a condition. This I will but cite several Scriptures to prove, and

leave you to peruse them if you be unsatisfied ; Rom. viii. 1—14. They that are in Christ Jesus, are they that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. “ If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.” “ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city ;” Rev. xxii. 14. “ He is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him ;” Heb. v. 9. “ Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my burden, for it is light. Learn of me to be meek and lowly, &c. and ye shall find rest,” &c. ; Matt. xi. 28—30. John xvi. 27. Luke xiii. 24. Phil. ii. 12. Rom. ii. 7. 10. John xv. 12. 17. xii. 21. Matt. v. 44. Luke vi. 27. 35. Prov. viii. 17. 21. Matt. x. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. 2 Tim. ii. 5. 12. Matt. xxv. 41, 42. James ii. 21—24. 26. i. 22. ii. 5. Prov. i. 23. xxviii. 13. Luke xiii. 3. 5. Matt. xii. 37. xi. 25, 26. vi. 12. 14, 15. 1 John i. 9. Acts viii. 22. iii. 19. xxii. 16. Luke vi. 37. 1 Pet. iv. 18. i. 2. 22. Rom. vi. 16. ; with abundance more the like. Now when a poor sinner that hath oft fallen into drunkenness, railing, strife, envying, &c. shall read that these are the works of the flesh, and that for these things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience ; and that every man shall be judged according to his works, and according to what he hath done in the flesh ; and that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God ; it cannot be but that his assurance of salvation must needs have so great a dependance on his obedience, as that these sins will diminish it. When he reads Rom. vi. 16., “ His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness,” he must needs think, how such a time, and such a time, he obeyed sin ; and the oftener and the more wilfully he did it, the more doubtful will his case be ; especially if he be yet in a sinful course, which he might avoid, whether of gross sin, or any wilful sin, it cannot be but this will obscure the evidence of his obedience. Men cannot judge beyond evidence ; and he that hath not the evidence of his true obedience, hath not the evidence of the sincerity of his faith.

3. Moreover, assurance and comfort are God’s gifts, and without his gracious aid we cannot attain them. But God will not give such gifts to his children, while they stand out

in disobedience, but when they carefully please him. Paternal justice requires this.

4. And it would do them abundance of hurt, and God much dishonour, if he should either tell them just how oft, or how far they may sin, and yet be saved; or yet should keep up their peace and comforts, as well in their greatest disobedience, as in their tenderest careful walking with him. But these things I spoke of before, and formerly elsewhere.

You see then, that though some obedient, tender Christians may yet on several occasions be deprived of assurance; yet ordinarily no other but they have assurance; and that assurance and comfort will rise and fall with obedience.

And for all the Antinomian objections against this, as if it were a leading men to their own righteousness from Christ, I refer you to the twenty arguments which I before laid you down, to prove that we may and must fetch our assurance and comfort from our own works and graces; and so from our own evangelical righteousness, which is subordinate to Christ's righteousness, (which he speaks of, Matt. xxv. last, and in forty places more) though we must have no thoughts of a legal righteousness (according to the law of works or ceremonies) in ourselves. They may as well say, that a woman doth forsake her husband, because she comforteth herself in this, that she hath not forsaken him, or been false and unchaste, thence gathering that he will not give her a bill of divorce. Or that a servant forsakes his master, or a subject his prince, or a parent is forsaken by his child; because they comfort themselves in their obedience and loyalty, gathering thence that they are not flat rebels, and shall not be used as rebels. Or that any that enter covenant with superiors do forsake them, because they comfort themselves in their keeping covenant, as a sign that the covenant shall be kept with them: all these are as wise collections, as to gather, that a man forsakes Christ and his righteousness, and setteth up his own instead of it, because he looks at his not forsaking, refusing and vilifying of Christ, his love and faithful obedience to Christ, as comfortable signs that Christ will not forsake and reject him. Do these men think that a rebel may have the love of his prince, and as much comfort from him as a loyal subject? Or a whorish woman have as much love and comfort from her husband, as a faithful wife? Or a stubborn, rebellious son or servant have as

much love and comfort from their father or mother as the dutiful? If there be so near a relation as hitherto we have supposed, between a sovereign and subjection to him, and a husband and marriage-faithfulness to him, and a master and service to him, and a father and loving obedience to him, it is strange that men should suppose such a strange opposition, as these men do. Certainly God doth not so, when he saith, "If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6. And Isaiah i. 3, 4. "Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward." And Jer. iii. 19. "Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not depart away from me." And 2 Tim. ii. 19. "The Lord knoweth who are his. And, let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." And Psalm lxvi. 18. "If I delight in iniquity, or regard it, God will not hear my prayers," saith David himself. Doubtless Paul did not forsake Christ's righteousness by confidence in his own, when he saith, "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation among you;" 2 Cor. i. 12. with many the like which I before mentioned. Nor doth the Lord Jesus at the day of judgment turn men off from his righteousness, when he saith, "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, I will make thee ruler over much;" Luke xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 23. and calls them thereupon righteous, saying, "And the righteous shall go into life everlasting;" Matt. xxv. last.

It remains now that I further acquaint you what use you should make of this observation, concerning the dependance of assurance upon actual obedience. And 1. I advise you, if your soul remain in doubts and troubles, and you cannot enjoy God in any way of peace and comfort, nor see any clear evidence of the sincerity of your faith, take a serious view of your obedience, and faithfully survey your heart and life, and your daily carriage to God in both. See whether

there be nothing that provokes God to an unusual jealousy; if there be, it is only the increase of some carnal interest in your heart, or else the wilful or negligent falling into some actual sin, of commission or of omission. In the making of this search, you have need to be exceeding cautious; for if I have any acquaintance with the mystery of this business, your peace or trouble, comfort or discomfort, will mainly depend on this. And your care must lie in this point, that you diligently avoid these two extremes: first, That you do not deal negligently and unfaithfully with your own soul, at that labour which you must needs be at before you can know it. Secondly, That you do not either condemn yourself when your conscience doth acquit you; or vex your soul with needless scruples, or make unavoidable or ordinary infirmities to seem such wilful heinous sins, as should quite break your settled peace. O how narrow is the path between these two mistaken roads, and how hard a thing, and how rare is it to find it and to keep in it! For yourself, and all tender-conscienced Christians, that are heartily willing to be ruled by Christ, I would persuade you equally to beware of both these; because some souls are as inclinable to the latter extreme as to the former (during their troubles). But for the most Christians in the world, I would have them first and principally avoid the former, and that with far greater diligence than the latter. For, 1. Naturally all men's hearts are far more prone to deal too remissly, yea, unfaithfully with themselves, in searching after their sins, than too scrupulously and tenderly. The best men have so much pride and carnal self-love, that it will strongly incline them to excuse, or mince, or hide their sins, and to think far lighter and more favourably of it than they should do, because it is theirs. How was the case altered with Judah towards Tamar, when he once saw it was his own act! How was David's zeal for justice allayed, as soon as he heard, "Thou art the man!" This is the most common cause why God is fain to hold our eyes on our transgressions by force, because we are so loath to do it more voluntarily; and why he openeth our sin in such crimson and scarlet colours to us; because we are so apt either to look on them as nothing, or to shut our eyes and overlook them: and why God doth hold us so long on the rack, because we would still ease ourselves by ingenious excuses and extenuations:

and why God doth break the skin so oft, and keep open our wounds; because we are still healing them by such carnal shifts. This proud, sin-excusing distemper needs no other proof or discovery, than our great tenderness and backwardness in submitting to reproofs: how long do we excuse sin, and defend our pretended innocency, as long as we can find a word to say for it. Doth not daily experience of this sad distemper, even in most of the godly, discover fully to us, that most men (yea naturally all) are far more prone to overlook their sins, and deal faithlessly and negligently in the trial; than to be too tender, and to charge themselves too deep.

Besides, if a Christian be heartily willing to deal impartially, and search to the quick, yet the heart is lamentably deceitful, that he shall overlook much evil in it, when he hath done his best. And the devil will be far more industrious to provoke and help you to hide, excuse, and extenuate sin, than to open it, and see it as it is. His endeavour to drive poor souls into terrors, is usually but when he can no longer keep them in presumption. When he can hide their sin no longer, nor make it seem small, to keep them in impenitency, then he will make it seem unpardonable and remediless if he can; but usually not before. So that you see the frame of most men's spirits doth require them, to be rather over-jealous in searching after their sins, than over-careless and confident of themselves.

2. Besides this, I had rather of the two that Christians would suspect and search too much than too little, because there is a hundred times more danger in seeing sin less than it is, or overlooking it, than in seeing it greater than it is, and being over-fearful. The latter mistake may bring us into sorrow, and make our lives uncomfortable to us (and therefore should be avoided); but usually it doth not endanger our happiness; but is often made a great occasion of our good. But the former mistake may hazard our everlasting salvation, and so bring us to remediless trouble.

3. Yea, lest you should say, 'This is sad language to comfort a distressed, wounded soul,' let me add this one reason more. So far as I can learn by reading the Scriptures, and by long experience of very many souls under troubles of conscience, It is most commonly some notable cherished corruption, that breedeth and feedeth the sad, un-

comfortable estate of most professors, except those who by melancholy or very great ignorance, are so weak in their intellectuals, as that they are incapable of making any true discovery of their condition, and of passing a right judgment upon themselves thereupon.

Lest I should make sad any soul that God would not have sad, let me desire you to observe, 1. That I say but of most professors, not all; for I doubt not but God may hide his face for some time from some of the holiest and wisest of believers, for several and great reasons. 2. Do but well observe most of the humble, obedient Christians, that you know to lie under any long and sad distress of mind, and you will find that they are generally of one of the two fore-mentioned sorts: either so ignorant as not to know well what faith is, or what the conditions of the covenant are, or what is the extent of the promise, or the full sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction for all sinners, or what are the evidences by which they may try themselves: or else they are melancholy persons, whose fancy is still molested with these perturbing vapours, and their understandings so clouded and distempered, that reason is not free. And so common is this latter, that in my observation of all the Christians that have lived in any long and deep distress of mind, six, if not ten for one, have been deeply melancholy; except those that feed their troubles by disobedience. So that besides these ignorant and melancholy persons, and disorderly, declining Christians, the number of wounded spirits I think is very small, in comparison of the rest. Indeed it is usual for many at, or shortly after, their first change, to be under trouble and deep fears; but that is but while the sense of former sin is fresh upon their hearts. The sudden discovery of so deep a guilt, and so great a danger, which a man did never know before, must needs amaze and affright the soul: and if that fear remain long, where right means are either not known, or not used for the cure, it is no wonder; and sometimes it will be long, if the rightest means be used. But for those that have been long in the profession of holiness, and yet lie, or fall again under troubles of soul (except those before excepted), I would have them make a diligent search, whether God do not observe either some fleshly interest enroach upon his right, or some actual sin to be cherished in their hearts or conversations.

And here let me tell you, when you are making this search, what particulars they be which I would have you to be most jealous of. 1. The former sort, which I call contrary carnal interest, encroaching on Christ's right, are they that you must look after with far more diligence than your actual sins. (1.) Because they are the far greatest and most dangerous of all sins, and the root of all the rest: for as God is the end and chief good of every saint, so these sins do stand up against him, as our end and chief good, and carry away the soul by that act which we call simply willing, or complacency, and so these interests are men's idols, and resist God's very sovereignty and perfect goodness; that is, they are against God himself as our God. Whereas those which I now call actual sins, as distinct from these, are but the violation of particular precepts, and against God's means and laws directly, and but remotely, or indirectly against his Godhead: and they have but that act of our will, which we call election, consent or use, which is proper to means, and not to the end. (2.) Because, as these sins are the most damnable, so they lie deepest at the heart, and are not so easily discovered. It is ordinary with many, to have a covetous, worldly, ambitious heart, even damnably such, that yet have wit to carry it fairly without; yea, and seem truly religious to themselves and others. (3.) Because these sins are the most common: for though they reign only in hypocrites and other unsanctified ones, yet they dwell too much in all men on earth.

If you now ask me what these sins are, I answer, They are as denominated from the point or term from which men turn, all comprised in this one, unwillingness of God, or the turning of the heart from God, or not loving God. But as we denominate them from the term or object to which they run, they are all comprised in this one, carnal self-love, or turning to, and preferring our carnal self before God: and as it inclineth to action, all, or most of it, is comprehended in this one word, 'Fleshpleasing.' But because there are a trinity of sins in this unity, we must consider them distinctly. Three great objects there are, about which this sin of fleshpleasing is exercised: 1. Credit or honour. 2. Profit or riches. 3. Sensual pleasure, more strictly so called, consisting in the more immediate pleasing of the senses; whereas the two first do more remotely please them,

by laying in provision to that end ; otherwise all three are in the general but fleshpleasing. The three great sins therefore that do most directly fight against God himself in his sovereignty, are, 1. Pride or ambition. 2. Worldliness, or love of riches. 3. Sensuality, voluptuousness, or inordinate love of pleasures. There are in the understanding indeed other sins, as directly against God as these, and more radical ; as, 1. Atheism, denying a God. 2. Polytheism, denying our God to be the alone God, and joining others with him. 3. Idolatry, owning false Gods. 4. Infidelity, denying Jesus Christ our Lord Redeemer. 5. Owning false Saviours and prophets, in his stead, or before him, as do the Mahometans. 6. Joining other Redeemers and Saviours with him, as if he were not the alone Christ. 7. Denying the Holy Ghost, and denying credit to his holy and miraculous testimony to the Christian faith, and blasphemously ascribing all to the devil ; which is the sin against the Holy Ghost. 8. Owning and believing in devils, or lying spirits instead of the Holy Ghost ; as the Montanists, Mahometans, Ranters, Familists do. 9. Owning and adjoining devils, or lying spirits, in co-ordination or equality with the Holy Ghost, and believing equally his doctrine and theirs ; as if he were not sole and sufficient in his work. All these are sins directly against God himself, and if prevalent, most certainly damning ; three against the Father, three against the Son, and three against the Holy Ghost. But these be not they that I need now to warn you of. These are prevalent only in pagans, infidels, and blasphemers. Your troubles and complaints shew that these are not predominant in you. It is therefore the three forementioned sins of the heart or will, that I would have you carefully to look after in your troubles, to see whether none of them get ground and strength in you.

1. Inquire carefully into your humility. It is not for nothing that Christ hath said so much of the excellency and necessity of this grace ; when he bids us learn of him to be meek and lowly ; when he blesseth the meek and poor in spirit : when he setteth a little child in the midst of them, and telleth them, except they become as that child, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven : when he stoopeth to wash and wipe his disciples' feet, requiring them to do so by one another. How oft doth the Holy Ghost

press this upon us? Commanding us, to submit ourselves to one another, and not to mind high things; but to condescend to men of low estate; Rom. xii. 16. and not to be wise in our own esteem, but in honour prefer others before ourselves; Rom. xii. 10. How oft hath God professed to resist and take down the proud, and to give grace to the humble, and dwell with them? Search carefully, therefore, lest this sin get ground upon you. For though it may not be so predominant and raging as to damn you, yet may it cause God to afflict you, and hide his face from you, and humble you by the sense of his displeasure, and the concealment of his love. And though one would think that doubting, troubled souls should be always the most humble and freest from pride, yet sad experience hath certified me, that much pride may dwell with great doubtings and distress of mind. Even some of the same souls that cry out of their own unworthiness, and fear lest they shall be firebrands of hell, yet cannot endure a close reproof, especially for any disgraceful sin, nor bear a disparaging word, nor love those, nor speak well of them, who do not value them, nor endure to be crossed or contradicted in word or deed, but must have all go their way, and follow their judgment, and say as they say, and dance after their pipe, and their hearts rise against those that will not do it; much more against those that speak or do any thing to the diminishing of their reputation: they cannot endure to be low, and passed by, and overlooked, when others are preferred before them, or to be slighted and disrespected, or their words, or parts, or works, or judgments to be contemned or disparaged. Nay, some are scarce able to live in the same house, or church, or town, in love and peace, with any but those that will humour and please them, and speak them fair, and give them smooth and stroking language, and forbear crossing, reproving, and disparaging them. Every one of these singly is an evident mark and fruit of pride; how much more all jointly. I seriously profess it amazeth me to consider, how heinously most professors are guilty of this sin! even when they know it to be the devil's own sin, and the great abomination hated of God, and read and hear so much against it as they do, and confess it so oft in their prayers to God, and yet not only inwardly cherish it, but in words, actions, gestures, apparel, express it and passionately

defend these discoveries of it. The confusions and distractions in church and state are nothing else but the proper fruits of it; so are the contentions among Christians, and the unpeaceableness in families; "for only from pride cometh contention," saith Solomon; Prov. xiii. 10. For my part, when I consider the great measure of pride, self-conceitedness, self-esteem, that is in the greatest part of Christians that ever I was acquainted with, (we of the ministry not excepted,) I wonder that God doth not afflict us more, and bring us down by foul means, that will not be brought down by fair. For my own part, I have had as great means to help me against this sin, as most men living ever had; first, in many years' trouble of mind, and then in near twenty years' languishing, and bodily pains, having been almost twenty times at the grave's mouth, and living near it continually; and lastly, and above all, I have had as full a sight of it in others, even in the generality of professors, and in the doleful state of the church and state, and heinous, detestable abominations of this age, which one would think should have fully cured it. And yet if I hear but either an applauding word from any of fame on one side, or a disparaging word on the other side, I am fain to watch my heart as narrowly as I would do the thatch of my house when fire is put to it, and presently to throw on it the water of detestation, resolution, and recourse to God. And though the acts through God's great mercy be thus restrained, yet the constancy of these inclinations assures me, that there is still a strong and deep root. I beseech you therefore, if you would ever have settled peace and comfort, be watchful against this sin of pride, and be sure to keep it down, and get it mortified at the very heart.

2. The next sin that I would have you be specially jealous of, is covetousness, or love of the profits or riches of the world. This is not the sin of the rich only, but also of the poor: and more heinous is it in them, to love the world inordinately, that have so little of it, than in rich men, that have more to tempt them, though dangerous in both. Nor doth it lie only in coveting that which is another's, or in seeking to get by unlawful means; but also in overvaluing and overloving the wealth of the world, though lawfully gotten. He that loveth the world, (that is, above Christ and holiness,) the love of the Father is not in him, (that is,

savingly and sincerely); 1 John ii. 15. He that loveth house or lands better than Christ, cannot be his disciple. I beseech you therefore when God hides his face, search diligently, and search again and again, lest the world should encroach on Christ's interest in your heart. If it should be so, can you wonder if Christ seem to withdraw, when you begin to set so light by him, as to value dung and earth in any comparison with himself? May he not well say to you, 'If you set so much by the world, take it, and see what it will do for you? If you can spare me better than your wealth, you shall be without me.' Must not the Lord Jesus needs take it exceedingly unkind, that after all his love and bloodshed, and pains with your heart, and seals of his kindness, and discoveries of his amiableness, and the treasures of his kingdom, you should now so much forget and slight him, to set up the world in any comparison with him? And to give such loving entertainment to his enemy? And look so kindly on a competitor? Is his glory worth no more than so? And hath he deserved no better at your hands? Again, therefore, do I beseech you to be afraid, lest you should be guilty of this sin. Examine whether the thoughts of the world grow not sweeter to you, and the thoughts of God and glory more unwelcome and displeasing; whether you have not an eagerness after a fuller estate, and too keen an edge upon your desires after riches, or at least after a fuller portion and provision for your children: or after better accommodations and contentments in house, goods, or other worldly things? Do not worldly hopes delight you too much? And much more your worldly possessions? Are you not too busily contriving how to be richer, forgetting God's words, 1 Tim. vi. 8, 9. 17. Doth not the world eat out the life of your duties, that when you should be serious with God, you have left your heart behind you, and drowned your affections in things below? Doth not your soul stick so fast in this mud and clay, that you can scarce stir it Godward in prayer or heavenly meditation? Do not you cut short duties in your family and in secret, if not frequently omit them, that so you may be again at your worldly business? Or do you not customarily hurry them over, because the world will not allow you leisure to be serious, and so you have no time to deal in good earnest with Christ or your soul? Do not your very speeches of Christ

and heaven grow few and strange, because the world must first be served? When you see your brother have need, do you not shut up the bowels of your compassions from him? Doth not the love of the world make you hard to your servants, hard to those you buy and sell with? And doth it not encroach much on the Lord's own day? Look after this earthly vice in all these discoveries, search for your enemy in each of these corners. And if you find that this is indeed your case, you need not much wonder if Christ and you be stranger than heretofore. If this earth get between your heart and the sun of life, no wonder if all your comforts are in an eclipse, seeing your light is but as the moon's, a borrowed light. And you must be the more careful in searching after this sin, both because it is certain that all men have too much of it, and because it is of so dangerous a nature, that should it prevail it would destroy; for covetousness is idolatry, and among all the heinous sins that the godly have fallen into, look into the Scripture, and tell me how many of them you find charged with covetousness. And also, because it is a blinding, befooling sin, not only drawing old men, and those that have no children, and rich men, that have no need to pursue these things as madly as others, but also hiding itself from their eyes, that most that are guilty of it will not know it: though, alas! if they were but willing, it were very easy to know it. But the power of the sin doth so set to work their wits to find excuses and fair names and titles for to cloke it, that many delude others by it, and more delude themselves, but none can delude God. The case of some professors of godliness that I have known, is very lamentable on this point, who being generally noted for a dangerous measure of worldliness, by most that know them, could yet never be brought to acknowledge it in themselves. Nay, by the excellency of their outward duties and discourse, and the strength of their wits, (alas! ill employed,) and by their great ability of speech, to put a fair gloss on the foulest of their actions, they have gone on so smoothly and plausibly in their worldliness, that though most accused them of it behind their backs, yet no man knew how to fasten any thing on them. By which means they were hindered from repentance and recovery.

In this sad case, though it be God's course very often to

let hypocrites and other enemies go on and prosper, because they have their portion in this life, and the reckoning is to come; yet I have oft observed, that for God's own people, or those that he means to make his people by their recovery, God useth to cross them in their worldly desires and designs. Perhaps he may let them thrive awhile, and congratulate the prosperity of their flesh, but at last he breaks in suddenly on their wealth, and scatters it abroad, or addeth some cross to it, that embitters all to them, and then asketh them, 'Where is now your idol?' And then they begin to see their folly. If you do dote on any thing below, to the neglecting of God, he will make a rod for you of that very thing you dote upon, and by it will he scourge you home to himself.

3. The third great heart-sin which I would have you jealous of, is sensuality or voluptuousness, or pleasing the senses inordinately. The two former are in this the more mortal sins, in that they carry more of the understanding and will with them, and make reason itself to be serviceable to them in their workings; whereas sensuality is more in the flesh and passion, and hath oftentimes less assistance of reason or consent of the will. Yet is the will tainted with sensual inclinations, and both reason and will are at the best guilty of connivance, and not exercising their authority over the sensual part. But in this sensuality is the more dangerous vice, in that it hath so strong and inseparable a seat as our sensual appetite; and in that it acteth so violently and ragingly as it doth; so that it beareth down a weak opposition of reason and will, and carrieth us on blindfold, and transformeth us into brutes. I will not here put the question concerning the gross acting of this sin (of that anon), but I would have you very jealous of a sensual disposition. When a man cannot deny his appetite what it would have; or at least, covetousness can do more in restraining it than conscience; when a man cannot make a covenant with his eyes, but must gaze on every alluring object; when the flesh draws to forbidden pleasures, in meats, drinks, apparel, recreations, lasciviousness, and all the considerations of reason cannot restrain it; this is a sad case, and God may well give over such to sadness of heart. If we walk so pleasingly to the flesh, God will walk more displeasingly to us.

And as you should be jealous of these great heart transgressions, so should you be of particular, actual sins. Examine whether the jealous eye of God see not something that much offendeth him, and causeth your heaviness. I will not enlarge so far as to mind you of the particular sins that you should look after, seeing it must be all, and your obedience must be universal. Only one I will give you a hint of. I have observed God sometimes shew himself most displeased and angry to those Christians, who have the least tenderness and compassion towards the infirmities of others. He that hath made the forgiving others a necessary condition of God's forgiving us, will surely withdraw the sense of our forgiveness, when we withdraw our forgiveness and compassion to men. He that casts the unmerciful servant into hell, who takes his fellow servant by the throat, will threaten us, and frown upon us, if we come but near it. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. He shall have judgment without mercy that sheweth no mercy;" James ii. 13. Study well, Rom. xiv. xv. Gal. vi.; which the proud, censorious, self-esteeming professors of this age have studied so little, and will not understand. When we deal sourly and churlishly with our weak brethren, and instead of winning an offender by love, we will vilify him, and disdain him, and say, 'How can such a man have any grace?' And will think and speak hardly of those that do but cherish any hopes that he may be gracious, or speak of him with tenderness and compassion; no wonder if God force the consciences of such persons to deal as churlishly and sourly with them, and to clamour against them, and say, 'How canst thou have any true grace, who hast such sins as these?' When our Lord himself dealt away so tenderly with sinners, that it gave occasion to the slanderous Pharisees to say, he was "a friend of Publicans and sinners;" (and so he was, even their greatest friend). And his command to us is, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves: let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself;" Rom. xv. 1—3. And Gal. vi. 1, 2. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

When people can bear with almost no infirmity in a neighbour, in a servant, or in their nearest friends, but will make the worst of every fault, no wonder if God make such feel their dealings with others, by his dealings with them. Had such that love to their poorest brethren, which thinketh no evil, and speaketh not evil, which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, becometh not itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;" 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. 7. Had we more of this love, which covereth a multitude of infirmities, God would cover our infirmities the more, and tell us of them, and trouble us for them the less.

To this sin I may add another, which is scarcely another, but partly the same with this, and partly its immediate effect; and that is, unpeaceableness and unquietness with those about us; this commonly occasioneth God to make us as unpeaceable and unquiet in ourselves. When people are so froward, and peevish, and troublesome, that few can live in peace with them, either in family or neighbourhood, except those that have little to do with them, or those that can humour them in all things, and have an extraordinary skill in smooth speaking, flattering or man-pleasing, so that neighbours, servants, children, and sometimes their own yoke-fellows, must be gone from them, and may not abide near them, as a man gets out of the way from a wild beast or a mad dog, or avoideth the flames of a raging fire; is it any wonder if God give these people as little peace in their own spirits, as they give to others? When people are so hard to be pleased, that nobody about them or near them can tell how to fit their humours; neighbours cannot please them, servants cannot please them, husband or wife cannot please each other; every word is spoke amiss, and every thing done amiss to them; what wonder if God seem hard to be pleased, and as frequently offended with them? Especially if their unpeaceableness trouble the church, and in their turbulence and self-conceitedness, they break the peace thereof.

Thus I have told you what sins you must look after when you find your peace broken, and your conscience disquieted; search carefully lest some iniquity lie at the root. Some I know will think that it is an unseasonable discourse to a troubled conscience, to mind them so much of their sins,

which they are apt to look at too much already. But to such I answer, either those sins are mortified and forsaken, or not. If they be, then these are not the persons that I speak of, whose trouble is fed by continued sin. But I shall speak more to them anon. If not, then it seems for all their trouble of conscience, sin is not sufficiently laid to heart yet.

The chiefest thing therefore that I intend in all this discourse, is this following advice to those that upon search do find themselves guilty in any of these cases. As ever you would have peace of conscience, set yourselves presently against your sins. And do not either mistakingly cry out of one sore, when it is another that is your malady; nor yet spend your days in fears and disquietness of mind, and fruitless complainings, and in the mean time continue in wilful sinning. But resist sin more, and torment your minds less; and break off your sin and your terrors together.

In these words I tell you what must be done for your cure; and I warn you of two sore mistakes of many sad Christians hereabout. The cure lieth in breaking off sin, to the utmost of your power. This is the Achan that disquieteth all. It is God's great mercy that he disquieteth you in sinning, and gives you not over to so deep a slumber and peace in sin, as might hinder your repentance and reformation. The dangerous mistakes here are these two.

1. Some do as the lapwing, cry loudest when they are furthest from the nest, and complain of an aching tooth, when the disease is in the head or heart. They cry out 'O I have such wandering thoughts in prayer, and such a bad memory, and so hard a heart, that I cannot weep for sin, or such doubts and fears, and so little sense of the love of God, that I doubt I have no true grace.' When they should rather say, 'I have so proud a heart, that God is fain by these sad means to humble me. I am so high in mine own eyes, so wise in my own conceit, and so tender of my own esteem and credit, that God is fain to make me base in my own eyes, and to abhor myself. I am so worldly and in love with earth, that it draws away my thoughts from God, dulls my love, and spoils all my duties. I am so sensual, that I venture sooner to displease my God than my flesh; I have so little compassion on the infirmities of my neighbours and

servants, and other brethren, and deal so censoriously, churlishly, and unmercifully with them, that God is fain to hide his mercy from me, and speak to me as in anger, and vex me as in sore displeasure. I am so froward, peevish, quarrelsome, unpeaceable, and hard to be pleased, that it is no wonder if I have no peace with God, or in my own conscience; and if I have so little quietness who love and seek it no more.' Many have more reason, I say, to turn their complaints into this tune.

2. Another most common, unhappy miscarriage of sad Christians lieth here, That they will rather continue complaining and self-tormenting, than give over sinning, so far as they might give it over if they would. I beseech you in the name of God, to know and consider what it is that God requireth of you. He doth not desire your vexation but reformation. No further doth he desire the trouble of your mind, than as it tendeth to the avoiding of that sin which is the cause of it. God would have you less in your fears and troubles, and more in your obedience. Obey more, and disquiet your mind less. Will you take this counsel presently, and see whether it will not do you more good than all the complaints and doubtings of your whole life have done. Set yourself with all your might against your pride, worldliness, and sensuality, your unpeaceableness and want of love and tenderness to your brethren; and whatever other sin your conscience is acquainted with. I pray you tell me, if you had gravel in your shoe, in your travel, would it not be more wisdom, to sit down and take off your shoe, and cast it out, than to stand still, or go complaining, and tell every one you meet of your soreness? If you have a thorn in your foot, will you go on halting and lamenting? or will you pull it out? Truly sin is the thorn in your conscience; and those that would not have such troubled consciences told of their sins for fear of increasing their distress, are unskilful comforters, and will continue the trouble while the thorn is in. As ever you would have peace then, resolve against sin to the utmost of your power. Never excuse it, or cherish it, or favour it more. Confess it freely. Thank those that reprove you for it. Desire those about you to watch over you, and to tell you of it, yea, to tell you of all suspicious signs that they see of it, though it be not evident. And if you do not see so much pride, worldliness, unpeace-

ableness, or other sins in yourself, as your friends think they see in you, yet let their judgment make you jealous of your heart, seeing self-love doth oft so blind us that we cannot see that evil in ourselves which others see in us; nay, which all the town may take notice of. And be sure to engage your friends that they shall not smooth over your faults, or mince them, and tell you of them in extenuating language, which may hinder conviction and repentance, much less silence them, for fear of displeasing you; but that they will deal freely and faithfully with you. And see that you distaste them not, and discountenance not their plain dealing, lest you discourage them, and deprive your soul of so great a benefit. Think best of those as your greatest friends, who are least friends to your sin, and do most for your recovery from it. If you say, 'Alas, I am not able to mortify my sins. It is nor in my power,' I answer, 1. I speak not of a perfect conquest; nor of a freedom from every passion or infirmity. 2. Take heed of pretending disability when it is unwillingness. If you were heartily willing, you would be able to do much, and God would strengthen you. Cannot you resist pride, worldliness, and sensuality, if you be willing? Cannot you forbear most of the actual sins you commit, and perform the duties that you omit, if you be willing? (though not so well as you would perform them.) Yea, let me say thus much, lest I endanger you by sparing you. Many a miserable hypocrite doth live in trouble of mind and complaining, and after all perish for their wilful disobedience. Did not the rich young man go far before he would break off with Christ? And when he did leave him, he went away sorrowful. And what was the cause of his sorrow? Why, the matter was, that he could not be saved without selling all, and giving it to the poor, when he had great possessions. It was not that he could not be rid of his sin, but that he could not have Christ and heaven without forsaking the world. This is the case of unsanctified persons that are enlightened to see the need of Christ, but are not weaned from worldly profits, honours and pleasures; they are perhaps troubled in mind (and I cannot blame them), but it is not that they cannot leave sinning, but that they cannot have heaven without leaving their delights and contentments on earth. Sin as sin they would willingly leave; for no man can love evil as evil. But their

fleshly profits, honours, and pleasures they will not leave, and there is the stop; and this is the cause of their sorrows and fears. For their own judgment cries out against them, "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If ye live after the flesh ye shall die. God resisteth the proud." This is the voice of their informed understandings. And conscience seconds it, and saith, "Thou art the man." But the flesh cries louder than both these, 'Wilt thou leave thy pleasures? Wilt thou undo thyself? Wilt thou be made a scorn or laughing-stock to all?' Or rather it strongly draws and provoketh, when it hath nothing to say. No wonder if this poor sinner be here in a strait, and live in distress of mind. But as long as the flesh holds so fast, that all this conviction and trouble will not cause it to lose its hold, the poor soul is still in the bonds of iniquity. The case of such an hypocrite, or half Christian, is like the case of the poor Papist, that having glutted himself with flesh in the Lent, was in this strait, that either he must vomit it up, and so disclose his fault, and undergo penance; or else he must be sick of his surfeit, and hazard his life. But he resolveth rather to venture on the danger, than to bear the penance. Or their case is like that of a proud woman, that hath got on a strait garment, or pinching shoe, and because she will not be out of the fashion, she will rather choose to bear the pain, though she halt or suffer at every step. Or like the more impudent sort of them, who will endure the cold, and perhaps hazard their lives, by the nakedness of their necks, and breasts, and arms, rather than they will control their shameless pride. What cure now should a wise man wish to such people as these? Surely, that the shoe might pinch a little harder, till the pain might force them to cast it off. And that they might catch some cold that would pay them for their folly (so it would but spare their lives), till it should force them to be ashamed of their pride, and cover their nakedness. Even so when disobedient hypocrites do complain that they are afraid they have no grace, and afraid God doth not pardon them, and will not save them, I should tell them, if I knew them, that I am afraid so too; and that it is not without cause, and desire, that their fears were such as might affright them from their disobedience, and force them to cast away their wilful sinning. I have said the more on this point, because I know

if this advice do but help you to mortify your sin, the best and greatest work is done, whether you get assurance and comfort or no; and withal, that it is the most probable means to this assurance and comfort.

I should next have warned you of the other extreme, *viz.* needless scruples; but I mean to make that a peculiar Direction by itself, when I have first added a little more of this great means of peace—a sound obedience.

Direct. XXIV. My next advice for the obtaining of a settled peace of comfort, is this, ‘Take heed that you content not yourself with a cheap course of religion, and such a serving of God, as costeth you little or nothing. But in your abstaining from sin, in your rising out of sin, and in your discharge of duty, incline most to that way which is most self-denying, and displeasing to the flesh, (so you be sure it be a lawful way). And when you are called out to any work which will stand you in extraordinary labour and cost, you must be so far from shrinking and drawing your neck out of the yoke, that you must look upon it as a special price that is put into your hand, and singular advantage and opportunity for the increase of your comforts.’

This rule is like the rest of the Christian doctrine, which is not thoroughly understood by any way but experience. Libertines and sensual professors that never tried it, did never well understand it. I could find in my heart to be large in explaining and applying it, but that I have been so large beyond my first intentions in the former Directions, that I will cut off the rest as short as I well can.

Let none be so wickedly injurious to me, as to say, I speak or think of any merit, properly so called, in any the most costly work of man. Fasten not that on me, which I both disclaim, and desire the reader to take heed of. But I must tell you these two things.

1. That a cheap religion is a far more uncertain evidence of sincerity, than a dear. It will not discover so well to a man’s soul, whether he prefer Christ before the world, and whether he take him and his benefits for his portion and treasure.

2. That a cheap religion is not usually accompanied with any notable degree of comforts, although the person be a sincere-hearted Christian.

Every hypocrite can submit to a religion that will cost

him little ; much more, which will get reputation with men of greatest wisdom and piety ; yea, he may stick to it, so it will not undo him in the world. If a man have knowledge, and gifts of utterance, and strength of body, it is no costly matter to speak many good words, or to be earnest in opposing the sins of others, and to preach zealously and frequently, (much more if he have double honour by it, reverent obedience, and maintenance, as ministers of the Gospel have, or ought to have). It is hard to discern sincerity in such a course of piety and duty. Woe to those persecutors that shall put us to the trial how far we can go in suffering for Christ ; but it should be a matter of rejoicing to us, when we are put upon it. To be patient in tribulation is not enough ; but to rejoice in it is also the duty of a saint. Let those that think this draweth men to rejoice too much in themselves, but hear what the Lord Jesus himself saith, and his Spirit in his apostles : “ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake ; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake : rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven ;” Matt. v. 10—12. “ My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (not inward temptations of the devil and our lust, but trials by persecution) ; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ;” James i. 2, 3. 12. See Luke vi. 23. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Acts v. 41. 2 Cor. vi. 10. vii. 4. Col. i. 11. Heb. x. 34. 2 Cor. xiii. 9. xii. 15. O how gloriously doth a tried faith shine, to the comfort of the believer, and the admiration of the beholders ! How easily may a Christian try himself at such a time, when God is trying him ! One hour’s experience, when we have found that our faith can endure the furnace, and that we can hazard or let go all for Christ, will more effectually resolve all our doubtings of our sincerity, than many a month’s trial by mere questioning of our own deceitful hearts.

Object. ‘ But, you may say, what if God call me not to suffering or hazards ? Must I cast myself upon it without a call ? Or must I be therefore without comfort ?’

Ans. No ; you shall not need to cast yourself upon suf-

fering, nor yet to be without comfort for want of it. I know no man but may serve God at dearer rates to the flesh than most of us do, without stepping out of the way of his duty. Nay, he must do it, except he will avoid his duty. Never had the church yet such times of prosperity, but that faithful duty would hazard men, and cause their trouble in the flesh. Can you not, nay, ought you not, to put yourself to greater labour for men's souls? If you should but go day after day among the poor, ignorant people where you live, and instruct them in the knowledge of God, and bear with all their weakness and rudeness, and continue thus with patience, this might cost you some labour, and perhaps contempt from many of the unthankful. And yet you should not do more than your duty, if you have opportunity for it, as most have, or may have, if they will. If you should further hire them to learn catechisms; if you should extend your liberality to the utmost, for relief of the poor, this would cost you somewhat. If you carry on every just cause with resolution, though never so many great friends would draw you to betray it; this may cost you the loss of those friends. If you would but deal plainly with the ungodly, and against all sin, as far as you have opportunity, especially if it be the sins of rulers and gentlemen of name and power in the world, it may cost you somewhat. Nay, though you were ambassadors of Christ, whose office is to deal plainly, and not to please men in evil, upon pain of Christ's displeasure; you may perhaps turn your great friends to be your great enemies. Go to such a lord, or such a knight, or such a gentleman, and tell him freely, that God looketh for another manner of spending his time, than in hunting and hawking, and sporting, and feasting, and that this precious time must be dearly reckoned for. Tell him that God looks he should be the most eminent in holiness, and in a heavenly life, and give an example thereof to all that are below him, as God hath made him more eminent in worldly dignity and possessions. Tell him, that where much is given, much is required; and that a low profession, and dull approbation of that which is good, will serve no man, much less such a man. Tell him, that his riches must be expended to feed and clothe the poor, and promote good uses, and not merely for himself and family, or else he will make but a sad account. And that he must freely engage his reputation, estate, and life,

and all for Christ and his Gospel, when he calls you to it; yea, and forsake all for him, if Christ put him to it, or else he can be no disciple of Christ. And then what good will his honours and riches do him, when his soul shall be called for? Try this course with great men, yea with great men that seem religious, and that no further than faithfulness and compassion to men's souls doth bind you, and do it with all the wisdom you can, that is not carnal; and then tell me what it doth cost you. Let those ministers that are near them, plainly and roundly tell both the parliament-men and commanders of the army, of their unquestionable transgressions, and that according to their nature (and woe to them if they do not), and then let them tell me what it doth cost them. Alas, sirs, how great a number of professors are base, daubing, self-seeking hypocrites, that cull out the safe, the cheap, the easy part of duty, and leave all the rest! And so ordinarily is this done, that we have made us a new Christianity by it; and the religion of Christ's own making, the self-denying course prescribed by our Master, is almost unknown; and he that should practise it would be taken for a madman, or some self-conceited cynic, or some saucy, if not seditious fellow. It is not, therefore, because Christ hath not prescribed us a more self-denying, hazardous, laborious way, that men so commonly take up in the cheapest religion; but it is through our false-heartedness to Christ, and the strength of sensual, carnal interests in us, which make us put false interpretations on the plainest precepts of Christ, which charge any unpleasing duty on us, and familistically turn them into allegories, or at least we will not yield to obey him. And truly, I think that our shifting off Christ in this unworthy manner, and even altering that very frame and nature of Christian religion (by turning that into a flesh-pleasing religion, which is more against the flesh than all the religions else in the world) and dealing so reservedly, superficially and unfaithfully in all his work, is a great cause why Christ doth now appear no more openly for men, and pour out no larger a measure of his Spirit in gifts and consolations. When men appeared ordinarily in the most open manner for Christ, in greatest dangers and sufferings, then Christ appeared more openly and eminently for them, (yet is none more for meek-

ness, humility and love, and against unmerciful or dividing zeal, than Christ).

2. And as you see that a cheap religiousness doth not so discover sincerity ; so secondly, it is not accompanied with that special blessing of God. As God hath engaged himself in his word, that they shall not lose their reward that give but a cup of water in his name, so he hath more fully engaged himself to those that are most deeply engaged for him ; even that they that forsake all for him, shall have manifold recompence in this life, and in the world to come eternal life. Let the experience of all the world of Christians be produced, and all will attest the same truth, That it is God's usual course to give men larger comforts in dearer duties, than in cheap : nay, seldom doth he give large comforts in cheap duties, and seldom doth he deny them in dearer ; so be it they are not made dear by our own sin and foolish indiscretion, but by his command, and our faithfulness in obeying him. Who knows not that the consolation of martyrs is usually above other men's, who hath read of their sufferings and strange sustentations ? Christian, do but try this by thy own experiences, and tell me, when thou hast most resolutely followed Christ in a good cause ; when thou hast stood against the faces of the greatest for God ; when thou hast cast thy life, thy family and estate upon Christ, and run thyself into the most apparent hazards for his sake ; hast thou not come off with more inward peace and comfort, than the cheaper part of thy religion hath afforded thee ? When thou hast stood to the truth and Gospel, and hast done good through the greatest opposition, and lost thy greatest and dearest friends, because thou wouldst not forsake Christ and his service, or deal falsely in some cause that he hath trusted thee in ; hast thou not come off with the blessing of peace of conscience ? Nay, when thou hast denied thy most importunate appetite, and most crossed thy lusts, and most humbled and abased thyself for God, and denied thy credit, and taken shame to thyself in a free confessing of thy faults, or patiently put up with the greatest abuses, or humbled and tamed thy flesh by necessary abstinence, or any way most displeased it, by crossing its interest, by bountiful giving, laborious duty, dangers or sufferings, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, his

truth and people ; hath it not been far better with thee in thy peace and comforts than before ? I know some will be ready to say, that may be from carnal pride in our own doing or suffering. I answer, it may be so ; and therefore let all watch against that. But I am certain that this is God's ordinary dealing with his people, and therefore we may ordinarily expect it. It is for their encouragement in faithful duty ; and I may truly say, for their reward, when himself calls that a reward which he gives for a cup of water. Lay well to heart that example of Abraham, for which he is so often extolled in the Scripture, viz. His readiness to sacrifice his only son. This was a dear obedience : " And, saith God, because (mark, because) thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee," &c. David would not offer to God that which cost him nothing ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. 1 Chron. xxi. 24. God will have the best of your hearts, the best of your labours, the best of your estates, the best of all, or he will not accept it. Abel's sacrifice was of the best, and it was accepted : and God saith to Cain, " If thou doest well, shalt not thou be accepted ?"

Seeing this is so, let me advise you, Take it not for a calamity, but for a precious advantage, when God calls thee to a hazardous costly service, which is like to cost thee much of thy estate, to cost thee the loss of thy chiefest friends, the loss of thy credit, the indignation of great ones, or the most painful diligence and trouble of body : shift it not off, but take this opportunity thankfully, lest thou never have such another for the clearing of thy sincerity, and the obtaining of more than ordinary consolations from God : thou hast now a prize in thy hand for spiritual riches, if thou hast but a heart to improve it. I know all this is a paradox to the unbelieving world ; but here is the very excellency of the Christian religion, and the glory of faith. It looks for its greatest spoils, and richest prizes from its conquests of fleshly interests : it is not only able to do it, but it expecteth its advancement and consolations by this way. It is engaged in a war with the world and flesh ; and in this war it plays not the vapouring fencer, that seems to do much, but never strikes home, as hypocrites and carnal, worldly professors do : but he says it home, and spares not, as one that knows, that the flesh's ruin must be his rising, and the

flesh's thriving would be his ruin. In these things the true Christian alone is in good sadness, and all the rest of the world but in jest. The Lord pity poor deluded souls! You may see by this one thing, how rare a thing true Christianity is among the multitude that take themselves for Christians; and how certain, therefore, it is that few shall be saved. Even this one point of true mortification and self-denial, is a stranger amongst the most of professors. O how sad a testimony of it are the actions of these late times, wherein so much hath been done for self, and safety, and carnal interests, and so little for Christ! yea, and that after the deepest engagements of mercies and vows that ever lay on a people in the world. Insomuch, that through the just judgment of God, they are now given up to doubt, whether it be the duty of rulers to do any thing as rulers for Christ, or no; or whether they should not let Christ alone to do it himself. Well, this which is such a mystery to the unregenerate world, is a thing that every genuine Christian is acquainted with; for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof;" and the world is dead to them, and they to the world; Gal. v. 21.

Take this counsel therefore in all the several cases mentioned in the Direction.

1. In your preventing sin, and maintaining your innocence, if you cannot do it without denying your credit, and exposing yourself to disgrace; or without the loss of friends, or a breach in your estate, do it nevertheless: yea, if it would cost you your utter ruin in the world, thank God that put such an opportunity into your hand for extraordinary consolations. For ordinarily the martyrs' comforts exceed other men's, as much as their burden of duty and suffering doth. Cyprian is fain to write for the comfort of some Christians in his times, that at death were troubled that they missed of their hopes of martyrdom. So also if you cannot mortify any lust without much pinching the flesh, do it cheerfully; for the dearer the victory costeth you, the sweeter will be the issue and review.

2. The same counsel I give you also in your rising from sin. It is the sad condition of those that yield to a temptation, and once put their foot within the doors of satan, that they ensnare themselves so, that they must undergo thrice as great difficulties to draw back, as they needed to have

done beforehand for prevention and forbearance. Sin unhappily engageth the sinner to go on; and one sin doth make another seem necessary. O how hard a thing is it for him that hath wronged another by stealing, deceit, overreaching in bargaining or the like, to confess his fault, and ask him forgiveness, and to the utmost of his ability to make restitution! What abundance of difficulties will be in the way! It will likely cost him the loss of his credit, besides the breach in his estate, and perhaps lay him open to the rage of him that he hath wronged. Rather he will be drawn to cover his sin with a lie, or at least by excuses. And so it is in many other sins. Now in any of these cases, when men indulge the flesh, and cannot find in their hearts to take that loss or shame to themselves, which a thorough repentance doth require, they do but feed the troubles of their soul, and hide their wounds and sores, and not ease them. Usually such persons go on in a galled, unpeaceable condition, and reach not to solid comfort. (I speak only of those to whom such confession or restitution is a duty.) And I cannot wonder at it: for they have great cause to question the truth of that repentance, and consequently the soundness of that heart, which will not bring them to a self-denying duty, nor to God's way of rising from their sin. It seems at present the interest of the flesh is actually predominant, when no reason or conviction will persuade them to contradict it. As ever you would have sound comfort then in such a case as this, spare not the flesh. When you have sinned, you must rise again or perish. If you cannot rise without fasting, without free confessing, without the utter shaming of ourselves, without restitution, never stick at it. This is your hour of trial: O yield not in the conflict. The dearer the victory costeth you, the greater will be your peace. Try it; and if you find it not so, I am mistaken. Yet if you have sinned so that the opening of it may more discredit the Gospel, than your confession will honour it, and yet your conscience is unquiet, and urgeth you to confess, in such a case be first well informed, and proceed warily and upon deliberation; and first open the case to some faithful minister or able Christian in secret, that you may have good advice.

3. The same counsel also would I give you in the performance of your duty. A magistrate is convinced he must

punish sinners, and put down alehouses, and be true to every just cause; but then he must steel his face against all men's reproaches, and the solicitations of all friends. A minister is convinced that he must teach from house to house, as well as publicly, if he be able; and that he must deal plainly with sinners according to their conditions; yea, and require the church to avoid communion with them, if they be obstinate in evil after other sufficient means; but then he shall lose the love of his people, and be accounted proud, precise, rigid, lordly, and perhaps lose his maintenance. Obey God now; and the dearer it costeth you, the more peace and protection, and the larger blessing may you expect from God: for you do, as it were, oblige God the more to stick to you; as you will take yourself obliged to own, and bear out, and reward those that hazard estate, and credit, and life for you. And if you cannot obey God in such a trial, it is a sad sign of a falsehearted hypocrite, except your fall be only in a temptation, from which you rise with renewed repentance and resolutions, which will conquer for the time to come. As Peter, who being left to himself for an example of human frailty, and that Christ might have no friend to stick by him when he suffered for our sin, yet presently wept bitterly, and afterwards spent his strength and time in preaching Christ, and laid down his life in martyrdom for him.

So perhaps many a poor servant, or hard labourer, hath scarce any time, except the Lord's day, to pray or read. Let such pinch the flesh a little the more (so they do not overthrow their health) and either work the harder, or fare the harder, or be clothed the more meanly, or especially break a little of their sleep, that they may find some time for these duties; and try whether the peace and comfort will not recompense it. Never any man was a loser for God. So private Christians cannot conscionably discharge the great plain duty of reproof and exhortation, joyingly, yet plainly telling their friends and neighbours of their sins, and danger, and duty, but they will turn friends into foes, and possibly set all the town on their heads. But is it a duty, or is it not? If it be, then trust God with the issue, and do your work, and see whether he will suffer you to be losers.

For my part I think, that if Christians took God's word before them, and spared the flesh less, and trusted them-

selves and all to Christ alone, and did not baulk all the troublesome and costly part of religion, and that which most crosseth the interest of the flesh, it would be more ordinary with them to be filled with the joys of the Holy Ghost, and walk in that peace of conscience which is a continual feast; and to have such full and frequent views both of the sincerity of their evidencing graces, and of God's reconciled face, as would banish their doubts and fears, and be a greater help to their certainty of salvation, than much other labour doth prove. If you flinch not the fiery furnace, you shall have the company of the Son of God in it. If you flinch not the prison and stocks, you may be able to sing as Paul and Silas did. If you refuse not to be stoned with Stephen, you may perhaps see heaven opened as he did. If you think these comforts so dear bought, that you will rather venture without them; let me tell you, you may take your course, but the end will convince you to the very heart, of the folly of your choice. Never then complain for want of comfort; remember you might have had it, and would not. And let me give you this with you; You will shortly find, though worldly pleasures, riches and honours, were some slight salves to your molested conscience here, yet there will no cure nor ease for it be found hereafter. Your merry hours will then all be gone, and your worldly delights forsake you in distress; but these solid comforts which you judged too dear, would have ended in the everlasting joys of glory. When men do flinch God and his truth in straits, and juggle with their consciences, and will take out all the honourable, easy, cheap part of the work of Christ, and make a religion of that by itself, leaving out all the disgraceful, difficult, chargeable, self-denying part; and hereupon call themselves Christians, and make a great show in the world with this kind of religiousness, and take themselves injured if men question their honesty and uprightness in the faith; these men are notorious self-deceivers, mere hypocrites; and in plain truth, this is the very true description by which damnable hypocrites are known from sound Christians. The Lord open men's eyes to see it in time while it may be cured! Yea, and the nearer any true Christian doth come to this sin, the more doth he disoblige God, and quench the spirit of comfort, and darken his own evidences, and destroy his peace of conscience, and create unavoidable troubles to his

spirit, and estrangedness betwixt the Lord Jesus and his own soul. Avoid this, therefore, if ever you will have peace.

Direct. XXV. My next advice shall be somewhat near of kin to the former. If you would learn the most expeditious way to peace and settled comfort, 'Study well the art of doing good; and let it be your every day's contrivance, care and business, how you may lay out all that God hath trusted you with, to the greatest pleasing of God, and to your most comfortable account.'

Still remember (lest any Antinomian should tell you that this savours of Popery, and trusting for peace to our own works;)

1. That you must not think of giving any of Christ's honour or office to your best works. You must not dream that they can do any thing to the satisfaction of God's justice for your sins; nor that they have any proper merit in them, so as for their worth to oblige God to reward you; nor that you must bring them as a price to purchase Christ and heaven; nor that you have any righteousness or worthiness in yourself and works, which the law of works will so denominate or own. But only you must give obedience its due under Christ; and so you honour Christ himself, when those that detract from obedience to him, do dishonour him; and you must have an evangelical worthiness and righteousness (so called, many and many times over in the Gospel) which partly consisteth in the sincerity of your obedience and good works; as the condition of continuing your state of justification, and right to eternal life.

2. Remember I have given you many arguments before, to prove that you may take comfort from your good works and gracious actions.

3. If any further objections should be made against this, read considerately and believingly, Matt. xxv. v. vii. throughout, or the former only; and I doubt not but you will be fully resolved. But to the work.

Those men that study no other obedience than only to do no (positive) harm, are so far from true comfort, that they have yet no true Christianity; I mean such as will be saving to them. Doing good is a high part of a Christian's obedience, and must be the chief part of his life. The heathen could tell him that asked him, how men might be like to God; the one way was, To do good to all. That is be-

yond our power, being proper to God the universal good, whose mercy is over all his works. But our goodness must be communicative, if we will be like God, and it must be extended and diffused as far as we can. The apostles charge is plain, and we must obey it if we will have any peace; "While you have time, do good to all men, but especially to them of the household of faith;" Gal. vi. 10. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" Isa. i. 16, 17. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" Heb. xiii. 16. "Charge them that be rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;" 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. See Luke vi. 33—35. Mark xiv. 7. Matt. v. 44. 1 Pet. iii. 11. James iv. 17. Psalm xxxiv. 14. xxxvii. 27. xxxvi. 3. xxxvii. 3. "Trust in the Lord, and do good." "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door;" Gen. iv. 7. "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him;" Acts x. 3, 4. 34, 35. "Know you not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;" Rom. vi. 13. 16. Matt. v. 16. Acts ix. 36. Eph. ii. 10. "We are created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." 1 Tim. ii. 10. v. 10. 25. 2 Tim. iii. 17. Tit. ii. 7. iii. 8. 14. ii. 14. "He redeemed us from all iniquity, that he might purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." 1 Pet. ii. 12. Heb. x. 24. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto

love, and to good works." What a multitude of such passages may you find in Scripture.

You see then how great a part of your calling and religion consisteth in doing good. Now it is not enough to make this your care now and then, or do good when it falls in your way ; but you must study it, or it will not be done well. You must study which are good works, and which are they that you are called to ; and which are the best works, and to be preferred, that you choose not a less instead of a greater. God looks to be served with the best. You must study for opportunities of doing good, and of the means of succeeding and accomplishing it ; and for the removing of impediments ; and for the overcoming of dissuasives, and withdrawing temptations. You must know what talents God hath entrusted you with, and those you must study to do good with : whether it be time, or interest in men, or opportunity, or riches, or credit, or authority, or gifts of mind, or of body : if you have not one, you have another, and some have all.

This therefore is the thing that I would persuade you to : take yourself for God's steward ; remember the time when it will be said to you, " Give account of thy stewardship ; thou shalt be no longer steward." Let it be your every day's contrivance, how to lay out your gifts, time, strength, riches or interest, to your Master's use. Think which way you may do most, first to promote the Gospel and the public good of the church ; and then, which way you may help towards the saving of particular men's souls ; and then, which way you may better the commonwealth, and how you may do good to men's bodies, beginning with your own and those of your family, but extending your help as much further as you are able. Ask yourself every morning, ' Which way may I this day most further my Master's business, and the good of men ? ' Ask yourself every night, ' What good have I done to-day ? ' And labour as much as may be, to be instruments of some great and standing good, and of some public and universal good, that you may look behind you at the year's end, and at your lives' end, and see the good that you have done. A piece of bread is soon eaten, and a penny or a shilling is soon spent ; but if you could win a

soul to God from sin, that would be a visible, everlasting good. If you could be instruments of setting up a godly minister in a congregation that want, the everlasting good of many souls might, in part, be ascribed to you. If you could help to heal and unite a divided church, you might more rejoice to look back on the fruits of your labour, than any physician might rejoice to see his poor patient recovered to health. I have told rich men in another book, what opportunities they have to do good, if they had hearts. How easy were it with them to refresh men's bodies, and to do very much for the saving souls; to relieve the poor; to set their children to trades; to ease the oppressed. How easy to maintain two or three poor scholars at the Universities, for the service of the church. But I hear but a few that do ever the more in it, except three or four of my friends in these parts. Let me further tell you, God doth not leave it to them as an indifferent thing; Matt. xxv. They must feed Christ in the poor, or else starve in hell themselves: they must clothe naked Christ in the poor, or be laid naked in his fiery indignation for ever. How much more diligently then must they help men's souls, and the church of Christ, as the need is greater, and the work better! Oh the blinding power of riches! Oh the easiness of man's heart to be deluded! Do rich men never think to lie rotting in the dust? Do they never think that they must be accountable for all their riches, and for all their time, and power, and interests? Do they not know that it will comfort them at death and judgment, to hear in their reckoning, Item, so much given to such and such poor; so much to promote the Gospel; so much to maintain poor scholars, while they study to prepare themselves for the ministry? &c. Than to hear, So much in such a feast; to entertain such gallants; to please such noble friends; so much at dice, at cards, at horse-races, at cock-fights; so much in excess of apparel; and the rest to leave my posterity in the like pomp? Do they not know that it will comfort them more to hear then of their time spent in reading Scripture, secret and open prayer, instructing and examining their children and servants; going to their poor neighbours' houses to see what they want, and to persuade them to godliness; and in being examples of eminent holiness to all; and in suppressing vice, and doing justice, than to hear of so much time

spent in vain recreations, visits, luxuries, and idleness? O deep unbelief and hardness of heart, that makes gentlemen that they tremble not to think of this reckoning! Well, let me tell both them and all men, that if they knew but either their indispensable duty of doing good, that lieth on them, or how necessary and sure a way (in subordination to Christ) this act of doing good is for the soul's peace and consolation, they would study it better, and practise it more faithfully than now they do: they would then be glad of an opportunity to do good, for their own gain, as well as for God's honour, and for the love of good itself. They would know, that lending to the Lord is the only thriving usury; and that no part of all their time, riches, interest in men, power, or honours, will be then comfortable to them, but that which was laid out for God; and they will one day find, that God will not take up with the scraps of their time and riches, which their flesh can spare; but he will be first served, even before all comers, and that with the best, or he will take them for no servants of his. This is true, and you will find it so, whether you will now believe it or no.

And because it is possible these lines may fall into the hands of some of the rulers of this commonwealth, let me here mind them of two weighty things:

1. What opportunities of doing very great good hath been long in their hands, and how great an account of it they have to make. It hath been long in their power to have done much to the reconciling of our differences, and healing our divisions, by setting divines a work of different judgments, to find out a temperament for accommodation. It hath long been in their power to have done much towards the supply of all the dark congregations in England and Wales, with competently able, sound and faithful teachers. We have many congregations that do contain three thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand souls, that have but one or two ministers that cannot possibly do the tenth part of the ministerial work of private oversight, and so poor souls must be neglected, let ministers be never so able or painful. We have divers godly, private Christians, of so much understanding, as to be capable of helping us, as officers in our churches; but they are all so poor, that they are not able to spare one hour in a day or two from their labour, much less to give up themselves to the work. How

many a congregation is in the same case? Nothing almost is wanting to us, to have set our congregations in the order of Christ, and done this great work of reformation which there is so much talking of, so much as want of maintenance for a competent number of ministers or elders to attend the work. I am sure, in great congregations this is the case, and a sore that no other means will remedy. Was it never in the power of our rulers to have helped us here? Was nothing sold for other uses, that was once devoted and dedicated to God, and might have helped us in this our miserable distress? Were our churches able to maintain their own officers, our case were more tolerable; but when a congregation that wants six, or seven, or ten, is not able to maintain one it is hard.

2. The second thing that I would mind our rulers of, is, what mortal enemies those men are to their souls, that would persuade them that they must not, as rulers, do good to the souls of men, and to the church as such; nor further the reformation, nor propagate the Gospel, nor establish Christ's order in the churches of their country, any otherwise than by a common maintaining the peace and liberties of all. What doctrine could more desperately undo you, if entertained? If you be once persuaded that it belongs not to you to do good, and the greatest good, to which all your successes have made way, then all the comfort, the blessing and reward is lost; and consequently all the glorious preparative successes, as to you, are lost. If once you take yourselves to have nothing to do as rulers for Christ, you cannot promise yourselves that Christ will have any thing to do for you, as rulers, in a way of mercy. This, Mr. Owen hath lately told you in his sermon, October 13, "The God of heaven forbid, that ever all the devils in hell, the Jesuits at Rome, or the seduced souls in England, should be able to persuade the rulers of this land, who are so deeply bound to God by vows, mercies, professions, and high expenses of treasure and blood, to reform his church, and propagate his Gospel; that now after all this, it belongeth not to them, but they must, as rulers, be no more for Christ than for Mahomet. But if ever it should prove the sad case of England to have such rulers, (which I strongly hope will never be,) if my prognostics fail not, this will be their fate: the Lord Jesus will forsake them, as they have forsaken him, and the

prayers of his saints will be fully turned against them; and his elect shall cry to him night and day, till he avenge them speedily, by making these his enemies to lick the dust, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel, because they would not that he should reign over them: and then they shall know whether Christ be not King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Perhaps you may think I digress from the matter in hand; but as long as I speak but for my Lord Christ, and for doing good, I cannot think that I am quite out of my way. But to return nearer to those for whose sakes I chiefly write, this is that sum of my advice; Study with all the understanding you have, how to do as much good, while you have time, as possibly you can, and you shall find that (without any Popish or Pharisaical self-confidence) to be the most excellent art for obtaining spiritual peace, and a large measure of comfort from Christ.

To that end use seriously and daily to bethink yourself, what way of expending your time and wealth, and all your talents, will be most comfortable for you to hear of, and review at judgment. And take that as the way most comfortable now. Only consult not with flesh and blood; make not your flesh of your counsel in this work, but take it for your enemy; expect its violent, unwearied opposition; but regard not any of its clamours or repinings. But know, as I said before, that your most true, spiritual comforts are a prize that must be won, upon the conquest of the flesh. I will only add to this, the words of the blessed Dr. Sibbs (a man that was no enemy to free-grace, nor unjust patron of man's works), in his preface to his "Soul's Conflict:" "Christ is first a King of righteousness, and then of peace. The righteousness that works by his Spirit brings a peace of sanctification; whereby though we are not freed from sin, yet we are enabled to combat with it, and to get the victory over it. Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influences issue from the sun. Which is so true, that very heathens upon the discharge of a good conscience, have found comfort and peace answerable; this is a reward before our reward." Again, "In watchfulness and diligence we sooner meet with comfort, than in idle complaining." Again, pp. 44, 45. "An unemployed life is a burden to itself. God is a pure Act;

always working; always doing. And the nearer our soul comes to God, the more it is in action, and the freer from disquiet. Men experimentally feel that comfort in doing that which belongs unto them, which before they longed for and went without." And in his preface to the "Bruised Reed:" "There is no more comfort to be expected from Christ than there is care to please him. Otherwise, to make him an abettor of a lawless and a loose life, is to transform him into a fancy; nay, into the likeness of him, whose works he came to destroy; which is the most detestable idolatry of all. One way whereby the Spirit of Christ prevaieth in his, is to preserve them from such thoughts: yet we see people will frame a divinity to themselves, pleasing to the flesh, suitable to their own ends; which being vain in the substance, will prove likewise vain in the fruit, and a building upon the sands." So far Dr. Sibbs. It seems there were libertines and Antinomians then, and will be as long as there are any carnal, unsanctified professors.

Direct. XXVI. Having led you thus far towards a settled peace, my next Direction shall contain a necessary caution, lest you run as far into the contrary extreme, viz. 'Take heed that you neither trouble your own soul with needless scruples, about matters of doctrine, of duty, or of sin, or about your own condition. Nor yet that you do not make yourself more work than God hath made you, by feigning things unlawful, which God hath not forbidden; or by placing your religion in will-worship, or in an over curious insisting on circumstantial, or an over rigorous dealing with your body.'

This is but the exposition of Solomon, "Be not over wise, and be not righteous overmuch;" Eccles. vii. 16. A man cannot serve God too much, formally and strictly considering his service; much less love him too much. But we may do too much materially intending thereby to serve God, which though it be not true righteousness, yet being intended for righteousness, and done as a service of God, or obedience to him, is here called overmuch righteousness. I know it is stark madness in the profane, secure world, to think that the doing of no more than God hath commanded us, is doing too much, or more than needs; as if God had bid us do more than needs, or had made such laws as few of the foolish rulers on earth would make. This is plainly to

blaspheme the Most High, by denying his wisdom and his goodness, and his just government of the world; and to blaspheme his holy laws, as if they were too strict, precise, and made us more to do than needs; and to reproach his sweet and holy ways, as if they were grievous, intolerable, and unnecessary. Much more is their madness, in charging the godly with being too pure, and too precise, and making too great a stir for heaven, and that merely for their godliness and obedience; when, alas, the best do fall so far short of what God's word, and the necessity of their own souls do require, that their consciences do more grievously accuse them of negligence, than the barking world doth of being too precise and diligent. And yet more mad are the world, to lay out so much time, and care, and labour, for earthly vanities, and to provide for their contemptible bodies for a little while; and in the mean time to think, that heaven and their everlasting happiness there, and the escaping of everlasting damnation in hell, are matters not worth so much ado, but may be had with a few cold wishes, and that it is but folly to do so much for it as the godly do. That no labour should be thought too much for the world, the flesh, and the devil, and every little is enough for God. And that these wretched souls are so blinded by their own lusts, and so bewitched by the devil into an utter ignorance of their own hearts, that they verily think, and will stand in it, that for all this they love God above all, and love heavenly things better than earthly, and therefore shall be saved.

But yet extremes there are in the service of God, which all wise Christians must labour to avoid. It is a very great question among divines, Whether the common rule in ethics, that virtue is ever in the middle between two extremes, be sound, as to Christian virtues; Amesius saith no. The case is not very hard, I think, to be resolved, if you will but use these three distinctions: 1. Between the acts of the mere rational faculties, understanding and will, called elicit acts, and the acts of the inferior faculties of soul and body, called imperate acts. 2. Between the acts that are about the end immediately, and those that are about the means. 3. Between the intention of an act, and the objective extension, and comparison of object with object. And so I say, 1. The end (that is, God and salvation) cannot be too fully known, or too much loved, with a pure, rational

love of complacency, nor too much sought by the acts of the soul, as purely rational : for the end being loved and sought for itself, and being of infinite goodness, must be loved and sought without measure or limitation, it being impossible here to exceed. *Prop. 2.* The means, while they are not misapprehended, but taken as means, and materially well understood, cannot be too clearly discerned, nor too rightly chosen, nor too resolutely prosecuted. *Prop. 3.* It is too possible to misapprehend the means, and to place them instead of the end, and so to overlove them. *Prop. 4.* The nature of all the means consisteth in a middle or mean between two extremes, materially ; both which extremes are sin : so that it is possible to overdo about all the means, as to the matter of them, and the extent of our acts. Though we cannot love God too much, yet it is possible to preach, hear, pray, read, meditate, confer of good too much : for one duty may shut out another, and a greater may be neglected by our overdoing in a lesser ; which was the Pharisees' sin in sabbath resting. *Prop. 5.* If we be never so right in the extension of our acts, yet we may go too far in the intention of the imperate acts or passions of the soul, and that both on the means and end ; though the pure acts of knowing or willing cannot be too great towards God and salvation, yet the passions and acts commonly called sensitive may. A man may think on God not only too much, (as to exclude other necessary thoughts,) but too intensely, and love and desire too passionately : for there is a degree of thinking or meditating, and of passionate love and desire, which the brain cannot bear, but it will cause madness, and quite overthrow the use of reason, by overstretching the organs, or by the extreme turbulency of the agitated spirits. Yet I never knew the man, nor ever shall do, I think, that was ever guilty of one of these excesses ; that is, of loving or desiring God so passionately, as to distract him. But I have often known weak-headed people, (that be not able to order their thoughts,) and many melancholy people, guilty of the other ; that is, of thinking too much, and too seriously and intensely on good and holy things, whereby they have overthrown their reason, and been distracted. And here I would give all such weak-headed, melancholy persons this warning, that whereas in my Book of Rest, I so much press a constant course of heavenly meditation, I do intend it only

for sound heads, and not for the melancholy, that have weak heads, and are unable to bear it. That may be their sin, which to others is a very great duty ; while they think to do that which they cannot do, they will but disable themselves for that which they can do. I would therefore advise those melancholy persons whose minds are so troubled, and heads weakened, that they are in danger of overthrowing their understandings, (which usually begins in multitudes of scruples, and restlessness of mind, and continual fears, and blasphemous temptations, where it begins with these, distraction is at hand, if not prevented,) that they forbear meditation, as being no duty to them, though it be to others ; and instead of it be the more in those duties which they are fit for, especially conference with judicious Christians, and cheerful and thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies. And thus have I shewed you how far we may possibly exceed in God's service. Let me now a little apply it.

It hath ever been the devil's policy to begin in persuading men to worldliness, fleshpleasing, security, and presumption, and utter neglect of God and their souls, or at least preferring their bodies and worldly things, and by this means he destroyeth the world. But where this will not take, but God awaketh men effectually, and casteth out the sleepy devil, usually he fills men's heads with needless scruples, and next setteth them on a religion not commanded, and would make poor souls believe they do nothing, if they do not more than God hath commanded them. When the devil hath no other way left to destroy religion and godliness, he will pretend to be religious and godly himself, and then he is always over-religious and over-godly in his materials. All overdoing in God's work is undoing ; and whoever you meet with that would overdo, suspect him to be either a subtle, destroying enemy, or one deluded by the destroyer. O what a tragedy could I here shew you of the devil's acting ! And what a mystery in the hellish art of deceiving could I open to you ! And shall I keep the devil's counsel ? No : O that God would open the eyes of his poor desolate churches at last to see it !

The Lord Jesus in wisdom and tender mercy, establisheth a law of grace, and rule of life, pure and perfect, but simple and plain ; laying the condition of man's salvation more in the honesty of the believing heart, than in the strength of

wit, and subtlety of a knowing head. He comprised the truths which were of necessity to salvation in a narrow room: so that the Christian faith was a matter of great plainness and simplicity. As long as Christians were such and held to this, the Gospel rode in triumph through the world, and an omnipotency of the Spirit accompanied it, bearing down all before it. Princes and sceptres stooped; subtle philosophy was nonplust; and all useful sciences came down, and acknowledged themselves servants, and took their places, and were well contented to attend the pleasure of Christ. As Mr. Herbert saith in his "Church Militant;"—

Religion thence fled into Greece, where arts
Gave her the highest place in all men's hearts:
Learning was proposed; philosophy was set;
Sophisters taken in a fisher's net.
Plato and Aristotle were at a loss,
And wheeled about again to spell Christ's cross.
Prayers chas'd syllogisms into their den,
And 'ergo' was transformed into Amen.

The serpent envying this happiness of the church, hath no way to undo us, but by drawing us from our Christian simplicity. By the occasion of heretics' quarrel and errors, the serpent steps in, and will needs be a spirit of zeal in the church; and he will so overdo against heretics, that he persuades them they must enlarge their creed, and add this clause against one, and that against another, and all was but for the perfecting and preserving of the Christian faith. And so he brings it to be a matter of so much wit to be a Christian, (as Erasmus complains,) that ordinary heads were not able to reach it. He had got them with a religious, zealous cruelty to their own and others' souls, to lay all their salvation, and the peace of the church, upon some unsearchable mysteries about the Trinity, which God either never revealed, or never clearly revealed, or never laid so great a stress upon: yet he persuades them that there was Scripture-proof enough for these; only the Scripture spoke it but in the premises, or in darker terms, and they must but gather into their creed the consequences, and put it into plainer expressions, which heretics might not so easily corrupt, pervert, or evade. Was not this reverent zeal? And was not the devil

seemingly now a Christian of the most judicious and forward sort? But what got he at this one game? 1. He necessitated implicit faith even in fundamentals, when he had got points beyond a vulgar reach among fundamentals. 2. He necessitated some living judge for the determining of fundamentals 'quoad nos,' though not 'in se' (the soul of Popish wickedness), that is, what it is in sense that the people must take for fundamentals. 3. He got a standing verdict against the perfection and sufficiency of Scripture, (and consequently against Christ, his Spirit, his apostles, and the Christian faith;) that it will not afford us so much as a creed or system of fundamentals, or points absolutely necessary to salvation and brotherly communion, in fit or tolerable phrases; but we must mend the language at least. 4. He opened a gap for human additions, at which he might afterwards bring in more at his pleasure. 5. He framed an engine for an infallible division, and to tear in pieces the church, casting out all as heretics that could not subscribe to his additions, and necessitating separation by all dissenters, to the world's end, till the devil's engine be overthrown. 6. And hereby he lays a ground upon the divisions of Christians, to bring men into doubt of all religion, as not knowing which is the right. 7. And he lays the ground of certain heart-burnings, and mutual hatred, contentions, revilings, and enmity. Is not here enough got at one cast? Doth there need any more to the establishing of the Romish and hellish darkness? Did not this one act found the seat of Rome? Did not the devil get more in his gown in a day than he could get by his sword in three hundred years? And yet the Holy Ghost gave them full warning of this beforehand; "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;" 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations;" Rom. xiv. 1. "The law of the Lord is perfect;" Psal. xix. "All Scripture is given by inspiration from God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" 2 Tim.

iii. 16, 17. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in them;" Isa. viii. 20. With many the like.

This plot the serpent hath found so successful, that he hath followed it on to this day. He hath made it the great engine to get Rome on his side, and to make them the great dividers of Christ's church. He made the pope and the council of Trent believe, that when they had owned the ancient creed of the church, they must put in as many and more additional articles of their own, and anathematize all gainsayers; and these additions must be the peculiar mark of their church as Romish; and then all that are not of that church, that is, that own not those superadded points, are not of the true church of Christ, if they must be judges. Yea, among ourselves hath the devil used successfully this plot! What confession of the purest church hath not some more than is in Scripture? The most modest must mend the phrase and speak plainer, and somewhat of their own in it, not excepting our own most reformed confession.

Yea, and where modesty restrains men from putting all such inventions and explications in their creed, the devil persuades men, that they being the judgments of godly, reverend divines (no doubt to be revered, valued, and heard), it is almost as much as if it were in the creed, and therefore whoever dissenteth must be noted with a black coal, and you must disgrace him, and avoid communion with him as an heretic. Hence lately is your union, communion, and the church's peace, laid upon certain unsearchable mysteries about predestination, the order and objects of God's decrees, the manner of the Spirit's most secret operations on the soul, the nature of the will's essential liberty, and its power of self-determining the Divine concurrence, determination or predestination of man's, and all other creature's actions, &c. That he is scarcely to be accounted a fit member for our fraternal communion that differs from us herein. Had it not been for this one plot, the Christian faith had been kept pure; religion had been one; the church had been one; and the hearts of Christians had been more one than they are. Had not the devil turned orthodox, he had not made so many true Christians heretics, as Epiphanius and Austin have enrolled in the black list. Had not the enemy of truth and peace got into the chair, and made

so pathetic an oration as to inflame the minds of the lovers of truth to be over zealous for it, and to do too much, we might have had truth and peace to this day. Yea, still, if he see any man of experience and moderation stand up to reduce men to the ancient simplicity, he presently seems the most zealous for Christ, and tells the inexperienced leaders of the flocks, that it is in favour of some heresy that such a man speaks; he is plotting a carnal syncretism, and attempting the reconcilment of Christ and Belial; he is tainted with Popery, or Socinianism, or Arminianism, or Calvinism, or whatsoever may make him odious with those he speaks to. O what the devil hath got by over-doing!

And as this is true in doctrines, so is it in worship and discipline, and pastoral authority, and government. When the serpent could not get the world to despise the poor fishermen that published the Gospel (the devil being judged, and the world convinced by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Agent, Advocate, and Vicar of Christ on earth), he will then be the most forward to honour and promote them. And if he cannot make Constantine a persecutor of them, he will persuade him to raise them in worldly glory to the stars, and make them lords of Rome, and possess them with princely dignities and revenues. And he hath got as much by over-honouring them, as ever he did by persecuting and despising them. And now in England, when this plot is descried, and we had taken down that superfluous honour, as antichristian, what doth the devil but set in again on the other side? And none is so zealous a reformer as he. He cries down all as antichristian, which he desireth should fall. Their tithes and maintenance are antichristian and oppressive (O pious, merciful devil), down with them! These church-lands were given by Papists to Popish uses, to maintain bishops, and deans, and chapters, down with them. These college-lands, these cathedrals, nay, these church-houses, or temples (for so I will call them, whether the devil will or no), all come from idolaters, and are abused to idolatry, down with them. Nay, think you but he hath taken the boldness to cry out, these priests, these ministers, are all antichristian, seducers, needless, enviers of the spirit of prophesy, and of the gifts of their brethren, monopolizers of preaching, down with them too! So that though he yet have not what he would have, the old serpent hath done

more as a reformer by overdoing, than he did in many a year as a deformer or hinderer of reformation. Yet if he do but see that there is a Sovereign Power that can do him a mischief, he is ready to tell them, they must be merciful, and not deal cruelly with sinners! Nay, it belongs not to them to reform, or to judge who are heretics and who not, or to restrain false doctrine, or church-disturbers. Christ is sufficient for this himself. How oft hath the devil preached thus, to tie the hands of those that might wound him.

Would you see any further how he hath played this successful game of overdoing? Why, he hath done as much by it in worship and discipline, as almost in any thing. When he cannot have discipline neglected, he is an overzealous spirit in the breasts of the clergy; and he persuades them to appoint men penance, and pilgrimages, and to put the necks of princes under their feet. But if this tyranny must be abated, he cries down all discipline, and tells them it is all but tyranny and human inventions; and this confessing sin to ministers for relief of conscience, and this open confessing in the congregation for a due manifestation of repentance, and satisfaction to the church, that they may hold communion with them, it is all but Popery and priestly domineering.

And in matter of worship, worst of all. When he could not persuade the world to persecute Christ, and to refuse him and his worship, the serpent will be the most zealous worshipper, and saith, as Herod, and with the same mind, "Come and tell me, that I may worship him." He persuades men to do and overdo. He sets them on laying out their revenues in sumptuous fabrics, in fighting to be masters of the holy land and sepulchre of Christ; on going pilgrimages; worshipping saints, angels, shrines, relics, adoring the very bread of the sacrament as God, excessive fastings, choice of meats, numbered prayers on beads, repetitions of words, so may Ave Maries, Pater Nosters, the name Jesus so oft repeated in a breath, so many holidays to saints, canonical hours, even at midnight to pray, and that in Latin for greater reverence, crossings, holy garments, variety of prescribed gestures, kneeling and worshipping before images, sacrificing Christ again to his Father in the mass; forswearing marriage; living retiredly, as separate from the world; multitudes of new, prescribed rules and orders of life; vow-

ing poverty; begging without need; creeping to the cross, holy water, and holy bread, carrying palms, kneeling at altars, bearing candles, ashes; in baptism, crossing, conjuring out the devil, salting, spittle, oil; taking pardons, indulgencies, and dispensations of the pope; praying for the dead, perambulations, serving God to merit heaven, or to ease souls in purgatory; doing works of supererogation, with multitudes the like. All these hath the devil added to God's worship, so zealous a worshipper of Christ is he, when he takes that way. Read Mr. Herbert's "Church Militant of Rome," pp. 188—190. I could trace this deceiver yet further, and tell you wherein, when he could not hinder reformation in Luther's days, he would needs overdo in reforming! But O how sad an example of it have we before our eyes in England! Never people on earth more hot upon reforming! Never any deeper engaged for it! The devil could not hinder it by fire and sword; when he sees that, he will needs turn reformer, as I said before, and he gets the word, and cries down antichrist, and cries up reformation, till he hath done what we see! He hath made a Babel of our work, by confounding our languages; for though he will be for reformation too, yet his name is Legion, he is an enemy to the one God, one Mediator and Head, one faith, and one baptism, one heart, and one lip, and one way, unity is the chief butt that he shoots at. Is baptism to be reformed? Christ is so moderate a Reformer, that he only bids, Down with the symbolical, mystical rite of man's vain addition. But the serpent is a more zealous reformer. He saith, Out with express covenanting; out with children; they are a corruption of the ordinance. And to others he says, Out with baptism itself. We might follow him thus through other ordinances. Indeed he so overdoes in his reforming, that he would not leave us a Gospel, a ministry, a magistracy to be for Christ, no, nor a Christ; (though yet he would seem to own a God, and the light of nature). All these with him are antichristian.

By this time I hope you see that this way of overdoing hath another author than many zealous people do imagine; and that it is the devil's common, successful trade; so that his agents in state-assemblies are taught his policy, 'When you have no other way of undoing, let it be by overdoing.' And the same way he takes with the souls of particular per-

sons. If he see them troubled for sin, and he cannot keep them from the knowledge of Christ and free grace, he puts the name of free grace and Gospel-preaching upon Antinomian and libertine errors which subvert the very Gospel and free grace itself. If he see men convinced of this, and that it is neither common nor religious libertinism and sensuality that will bring men to heaven, then he will labour to make Papists of them, and to set them on a task of external formalities, or macerating their bodies with hurtful fastings, watchings, and cold, as if self-murder were the highest pitch of religion, and God had pleasure to see his people torment themselves! I confess it is very few that ever I knew to have erred far in austere usage of their bodies. But some I have, and especially poor, melancholy Christians, that are more easily drawn to deal rigorously with their flesh than others be. And such writings as lately have been published by some English Popish formalists, I have known draw men into this snare. I would have all such remember, 1. That God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and such worshippers doth he seek. 2. That God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and that the vitals of religion are in a consumption, when the heat of zeal is drawn too much to the outside; and that placing most in externals, is the great character of hypocrisy, and is that pharisaical religion to which the doctrine and practice of the Lord Jesus was most opposite, as any that will read the Gospel may soon see. 3. That God hath made our bodies to be his servants, and instruments of righteousness (Rom vi. 13.), and helpful and serviceable to our souls in well-doing. And therefore it is disobedience, it is injustice, it is cruelty to disable them, and causelessly to vex and torment them, much more to destroy them. You may see by sick men, by melancholy men, by madmen and children, how unfit that soul is to know, or love, or serve God, that hath not a fit body to work in and by. The serpent knows this well enough. If he can but get you by excessive fastings, watchings, labours, studies, or other austerities, especially sadness and perplexities of mind, to have a sick body, a crazed brain, or a short life, you will be able to do him but little hurt, and God but little service, besides the pleasure that he takes in your own vexation. Nay, he will hope to make a further advantage of your weakness, and to keep many a

soul in the snares of sensuality, by telling them of your misery, and saying to them, 'Dost thou not see in such a man or woman, what it is to be so holy and precise? They will all run mad at last. If once thou grow so strict, and deny thyself thy pleasures, and take this precise course, thou wilt but make thy life a misery, and never have a merry day again.' Such examples as yours the devil will make use of that he may terrify poor souls from godliness, and represent the word and ways of Christ to them in an odious, and unpleasing, and discouraging shape. Doubtless that God who himself is so merciful to your body, as well as to your soul, would have you to be so too. He that provided so plentifully for its refreshment, would not have you refuse his provision. He that saith the righteous man is merciful to his beast, no doubt would not have him to be unmerciful to his own body. You are commanded to love your neighbours but as yourself; and therefore by cruelty and unmerciful dealing with your own body, you will go about to justify the like dealing with others. You durst not deny to feed, to clothe, to comfort and refresh the poor, lest Christ should say, "You did it not to me." And how should you dare to deny the same to yourself? How will you answer God for the neglect of all that service which you should have done him, and might, if you had not disabled your bodies and mind? He requireth that you delight yourself in him. And how can you do that when you habituate both mind and body to a sad, dejected, mournful garb? The service that God requires, is "To serve him with cheerfulness in the abundance that we possess;" Deut. xxviii. 47. If you think that I here contradict what I said in the former Directions, for pinching the flesh, and denying its desires, you are mistaken. I only shew you the danger of the contrary extreme. God's way lieth between both. The truth is (if you would be resolved how far you may please or displease the flesh) the flesh being ordained to be our servant and God's servant, must be used as a servant. You will give your servant food, and raiment, and wholesome lodging, and good usage, or else you are unjust, and he will be unfit to do your work. But so far as he would master you, or disobey you, you will correct him, or keep him under. You will feed your horse, or else he will not carry you; but if he grow unruly, you must tame him. It is a delusory formality of

Papists, to tie all the countries to one time and measure of fasting, as Lent, Fridays, &c. When men's states are so various that many (though not quite sick) have more need of a restoring diet; and those that need fasting, need it not all at once, not in one measure, but at the time, and in the measure, as the taming of their flesh requireth it. As if a physician should proclaim that all his patients should take physic such forty days every year, whether their disease be plethoric or consuming, from fulness or from abstinence, and whether the disease take him at that time of the year, or another. And remember that you must not under pretences of saving the body, disable it to serve God. You will not lay any such correction on your child or servant as shall disable them from their work, but such as shall excite them to it. And understand that all your afflicting your body must be either preventive, as keeping the fire from the thatch, or medicinal and corrective, and not strictly vindictive; for that belongs to your Judge. Though in a subordination to the other ends, the smart or suffering for its fault, is one end, and so it is truly penal or vindictive, as all chastisement is. And so Paul saith, "Behold what revenge," &c. 2 Cor. vii. 11. but not as mere judicial revenge is. Remember therefore, though you must so far tame your body as to bring it into subjection, that you perish not by pampering; yet not so far as to bring it to weakness, and sickness, and unfitness for its duty. Nor yet must you dare to conceit that you please God, or satisfy him for your sin, by such a wronging and hurting your own body. Such Popish religiousness shews, that men have very low and carnal conceits of God. Was it not a base wickedness in them that offered their children in sacrifice, to think that God would be pleased with such cruelty? Yea, were it not to have directed us to Christ, he would not have accepted of the blood of bulls and goats; it is not sacrifice that he desires. He never was bloodthirsty, nor took any pleasure in the creature's suffering. How can you think then that he will take pleasure in your consuming and destroying your own bodies? It is as unreasonable as to imagine, that he delights to have men cut their own throats, or hang themselves; for pining and consuming oneself is self-murder as well as that. Yet I know no man should draw back from a painful or hazardous work, when God calls him to it, for

fear of destroying the flesh; but do not make work or suffering for yourselves. God will lay as much affliction on you as you need, and be thankful if he will enable you to bear that; but you have no need to add more. If yourselves make the suffering, how can you with any encouragement, beg strength of God to bear it? And if you have not strength, what will you do? Nay, how can you pray for deliverance from God's afflictings, when you make more of your own? And thus I have shewed you the danger of overdoing, and what hindrance it is to a settled peace, both of church (state) and soul; though perhaps it may not condemn a particular soul so certainly (in most parts of it) as doing too little will.

5. The next part of my Direction (first expressed) is, That you avoid causeless scruples, about doctrines, duties, sins, or your own state.

These are also engines of the enemy, to batter the peace, and comfort of your soul; he knows that it is cheerful obedience, with a confidence of Christ's merits and mercies that God accepteth; and therefore if he cannot hinder a poor soul from setting upon duty, he will hinder him if he can, by these scruples, from a cheerful and prosperous progress. First, If he can, he will take in scruples about the truth of his religion, and shewing him the many opinions that are in the world, he will labour to bring the poor Christian to a loss. Or else he will assault him by the men of some particular sect, to draw him to that party, and so by corrupting his judgment, to break his peace; or at least to trouble his head, and divert his thoughts from God, by tedious disputes. The Papists will tell him, that they are the only true Catholic church (as if they had got a monopoly or patent for religion, and had confined Christ to themselves) who are such notorious abusers of him. And as if all the churches of Greece, Ethiopia, and the rest of the world, were unchurched by Christ, to humour Master Pope, though they be far more in number, and many of them sounder in doctrine than the Romanists are. Those of other parties will do the like, each one to draw him to their own way. And the devil would make him believe that there are as many religions as there be odd opinions, when alas, the Christian religion is one, and but one, consisting, for the doctrinals, in those fundamentals contained in our creed.

And men's lesser erroneous opinions are but the scabs that adhere to their religion. Only the church of Rome is a very leper, whose infectious disease doth compel us to avoid her company. (As for any sort of men that deny the fundamentals, I will not call them by the name of Christians.) So also in duties of worship, satan will be casting in scruples. If they should hear the word, he will cause them to be scrupling the calling of the minister, or something in his doctrine to discourage them. If they should dedicate their children to Christ in the baptismal covenant, he will be raising scruples about the lawfulness of baptizing infants. When they should solace their souls at the Lord's supper, or other communion of the church, he will be raising scruples about the fitness of every one that they are to join with, and whether it be lawful to join with such an ignorant man, or such a wicked man; or whether it be a true church, or rightly gathered, or governed, or the minister a true minister, and twenty the like. When they should join with the church in singing of God's praises, he will move one to scruple singing David's psalms; another to scruple singing among the ungodly; another singing psalms that agree not to every man's condition; another, because our translation is bad, or our metre defective, and we might have better. When men should spend the Lord's day in God's spiritual worship, he causeth one to scruple, whether the Lord's day be of divine institution. Another he drives into the other extreme, to scruple almost every thing that is not worship. Whether they may provide their meat on that day (when yet it is a solemn day of thanksgiving, and they scruple not much more on other thanksgiving-days) or whether they may so much as move a stick out of the way. Others he moves to trouble themselves with scruples, as what hour the day begins and ends, and the like. Whereas, if they, 1. Understood that worldly rest is commanded but as a help to spiritual worship. 2. And that they must employ as much of that day in God's work as they do of other days in their callings, and rest in the night as at other times, and that God looks to time for the work's sake, and not at the work for the time's sake; this would cast out most of their scruples. The like course satan takes with Christians in reading, praying in secret, or in their families, teaching their families, reproving sinners, teaching the ignorant, meditation, and all other duties, too long to mention the

particular scruples which he thrusts into men's heads, much more to resolve them, which would require a large volume alone.

Now I would entreat all such Christians to consider, how little they please God, and how much they please satan, and how much they break their own peace, and the peace of the churches. If you send a man on a journey, would you like him better that would stand questioning and scrupling every step he goes, whether he set the right foot before? Or whether he should go in the foot-path or in the road? Or him that would cheerfully go on, not thinking which foot goeth forward; and rather step a little beside the path, and in again, than to stand scrupling when he should be going? If you send reapers into your harvest, which would you like better, him that would stand scrupling how many straws he should cut down at once, and at what height; and with fears of cutting them too high or too low, too many at once, or too few, should do you but little work? Or him that would do his work cheerfully, as well as he can? Would you not be angry at such childish, unprofitable diligence or curiosity, as is a hindrance to your work? And is it not so with our Master? There was but one of those parties in the right that Paul spoke to; Rom. xiv. xv. And yet he not only persuades them to bear with one another, and not to judge one another, but to receive the weak in faith, and not to doubtful disputations; but he bids them, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." How? Can he that erreth be fully persuaded in his error? Yes, he may go on boldly and confidently, not troubling himself with demurs in his duty, as long as he took the safer side in his doubt. Not that this should encourage any to venture on sin, or to neglect a due inquiry after God's mind. But I speak against tormenting scruples, which do no work, but hinder from it, and stay us from our duty.

The same I say against scruples about your sins; satan will make you believe that every thing is a sin, that he may disquiet you, if he cannot get you to believe that nothing almost is sin, that he may destroy you. You shall not put a bit in your mouth, but he will move a scruple, whether it were not too good, or too much. You shall not clothe yourself, but he will move you to scruple the lawfulness of it. You shall not come into any company, but he will afterward vex you about every word you spoke, lest you sinned.

The like I may say also about your condition, but more of that anon.

Direct. XXVII. ‘When God hath once shewed you a certainty, or but a strong probability of your sincerity and his especial love, labour to fix this so deep in your apprehension and memory, that it may serve for the time to come, and not only for the present. And leave not your soul too open to changes, upon every new apprehension, nor to question all that is past upon every jealousy; except when some notable declining to the world, and the flesh, or a committing of gross sins, or a wilfulness or carelessness in other sins that you may avoid, do give you just cause of questioning your sincerity, and bringing your soul again to the bar, and your estate to a more exact review.’

Some Antinomian writers and preachers you shall meet with, who will persuade you, whatsoever sins you fall into, never more to question your justification or salvation. I have said enough before to prove their doctrine detestable. Their reason is, because God changeth not as we change, and justification is never lost. To which I answer, 1. God hated us while we were workers of iniquity; Psal. xi. 5. v. 5. And was angry with us when we were children of wrath; Ephes. iii. 1—3. And afterward he laid by that hatred and wrath; and all this without change. If we cannot reach to apprehend how God’s unchangeableness can stand with the fullest and most frequent expressions of him in Scripture, must we therefore deny what those expressions do contain? As Austin saith, ‘Shall we deny that which is plain, because we cannot reach that which is obscure and difficult?’ 2. But if these men had well studied the Scriptures, they might have known that the same man that was yesterday hated as an enemy, may to-day be reconciled and loved as a son, and that without any change in God; even as it falls out within the reach of our knowledge: for God ruleth the world by his laws; they are his moral instruments; by them he condemneth; by them he justifieth, so far as he is said in this life, before the judgment day, to do it, (unless there be any other secret act of justification with him, which man is not able now to understand). The change is therefore in our relations, and in the moral actions of the laws. When we are unbelievers, and impenitent, we are related to God as enemies, rebels, unjustified and unpar-

doned; being such as God's law condemneth and pronounceth enemies, and the law of grace doth not yet justify or pardon; and so God is, as it were, in some sense obliged, according to that law which we are under, to deal with us as enemies, by destroying us; and this is God's hating, wrath, &c. When we repent, return, and believe, our relation is changed; the same law that did condemn us, is relaxed and disabled, and the law of grace doth now acquit us; it pardoneth us, it justifieth us, and God by it: and so God is reconciled to us, when we are such as according to his own law of grace he is, as it were, obliged to forgive and to do good to, and to use us as sons: is not all this apparently without any change in God? Cannot he make a law that shall change its moral action according to the change of the actions or inclinations of sinners? And this without any change in God? And so, if it should so be that a justified man should fall from God, from Christ, from sincere faith or obedience, the law would condemn him again, and the law of grace would justify him no more (in that state), and all this without any change in God. 3. If this Antinomian argument would prove any thing, it would prove justification before, and so without, Christ's satisfaction, because there is no change in God. 4. The very point, That no justified man shall ever fall from Christ, is not so clear and fully revealed in Scripture, and past all doubt from the assault of objections, as that a poor soul in such a relapsed estate should venture his everlasting salvation wholly on this, supposing that he were certain that he was once sincere. For my own part, I am persuaded that no rooted believer, that is habitually and groundedly resolved for Christ, and hath crucified the flesh and the world, (as all have that are thoroughly Christ's,) do ever fall quite away from him afterwards. But I dare not lay my salvation on this. And if I were no surer of my salvation, than I am of the truth of this my judgment, to speak freely, my soul would be in a very sad condition. 5. But suppose it as certain and plain as any word in the Gospel, (that a justified man is never quite unjustified;) yet as every new sin brings a new obligation to punishment, (or else they could not be pardoned, as needing no pardon, so must every sin have its particular pardon, and consequently the sinner a particular justification from the guilt of that sin,) besides his first general par-

don (and justification): for to pardon sin before it is committed, is to pardon sin that is no sin, which is a contradiction, and impossibility. Now, though for daily, unavoidable infirmities, there be a pardon of course, upon the title of our habitual faith and repentance; yet whether in case of gross sin, or more notable defection, this will prove a sufficient title to particular pardon, without the addition of actual repentance; and what case the sinner is in till that actual repentance and faith, as I told you before, are so difficult questions (it being ordered by God's great wisdom that they should be so,) that it beseems no wise man to venture his salvation on his own opinion in these. Nay, it is certain, that if gross sinners having opportunity and knowledge of their sins, repent not, they shall perish. And therefore I think, a justified man hath great reason upon such falls, to examine his particular repentance, (as well as his former state,) and not to promise himself, or presume upon a pardon without it. 6. And besides all this, though both the continuance of faith, and non-intercision of justification be never so certain, yet when a man's obedience is so far overthrown, his former evidences and persuasions of his justification will be uncertain to him. Though he have no reason to think that God is changeable, or justification will be lost, yet he hath reason enough to question whether ever he were a true believer, and so were ever justified. For faith worketh by love; and they that love Christ will keep his commandments. Libertines and carnal men may talk their pleasure; but when satan maintains not their peace, sin will break it: and Dr. Sibbs's words will be found true, "Soul's Conflict," pp. 41, 42. "Though the main pillar of our comfort be the free forgiveness of our sins, yet if there be a neglect of growing in holiness, the soul will never be soundly quiet, because it will be prone to question the truth of justification; and it is as proper for sin to raise doubts and fears in the conscience, as for rotten flesh and wood to breed worms: where there is not a pure conscience, there is not a pacified conscience," &c. Read the rest.

Thus much I have been fain to premise, lest my words for consolation should occasion security and desolation. But now let me desire you to peruse the Direction, and practise it. If when God hath given you assurance, or strong probabilities of your sincerity, you will make use of

it but only for that present time, you will never then have a settled peace in your soul : besides, the great wrong you do to God, by necessitating him to be so often renewing such discoveries, and repeating the same words to you so often over. If your child offend you, would you have him when he is pardoned, no longer to believe it, than you are telling it him ? Should he be still asking you over and over every day, ‘ Father, am I forgiven, or no ? ’ Should not one answer serve his turn ? Will you not believe that your money is in your purse or chest any longer than you are looking on it ? Or that your corn is growing on your land, or your cattle in your grounds, any longer than you are looking on them ? By this course a rich man should have no more content than a beggar, longer than he is looking on his money, or goods, or lands ; and when he is looking on one, he should again lose the comfort of all the rest. What hath God given you a memory for, but to lay up former apprehensions, and discoveries, and experiences, and make use of them on all meet occasions afterwards ? Let me therefore persuade you to this great and necessary work. When God hath once resolved your doubts, and shewed you the truth of your faith, love or obedience, write it down, if you can, in your book, (as I have advised you in my Treatise of Rest,) ‘ Such a day, upon serious perusal of my heart, I found it thus and thus with myself.’ Or at least, write it deep in your memory ; and do not suffer any fancies, or fears, or light surmises to cause you to question this again, as long as you fall not from the obedience or faith which you then discovered. Alas ! man’s apprehension is a most mutable thing ! If you leave your soul open to every new apprehension, you will never be settled : you may think two contrary things of yourself in an hour. You have not always the same opportunity for right discerning, nor the same clearness of apprehension, nor the same outward means to help you, nor the same inward assistance of the Holy Ghost. When you have these, therefore, make use of them, and fix your wavering soul, and take your question and doubt as resolved, and do not tempt God, by calling him to new answers again and again, as if he had given you no answer before. You will never want some occasion of jealousy and fears as long as you have corruption in your heart, and sin in your life, and a tempter to be troubling

you; but if you will suffer any such wind to shake your peace and comforts, you will be always shaking and fluctuating, as a wave of the sea. And you must labour to apprehend not only the uncomfortableness, but the sinfulness also of this course. For though the questioning your own sincerity on every small occasion, be not near so great a sin as the questioning of God's merciful nature, or the truth of his promise, or his readiness to shew mercy to the penitent soul, or the freeness and fulness of the covenant of grace; yet even this is no contemptible sin. For, 1. You are doing satan's work, in denying God's graces, and accusing yourself falsely, and so pleasing the devil in disquieting yourself. 2. You slander God's Spirit as well as your own soul, in saying, he hath not renewed and sanctified you, when he hath. 3. This will necessitate you to further unthankfulness, for who can be thankful for a mercy, that thinks he never received it? 4. This will shut your mouth against all those praises of God, and that heavenly, joyful commemoration of his great, unspeakable love to your soul, which should be the blessed work of your life. 5. This will much abate your love to God, and your sense of the love of Christ in dying for you, and all the rest of your graces, while you are still questioning your interest in God's love. 6. It will lay such a discouragement on your soul, as will both destroy the sweetness of all duties to you (which is a great evil), and thereby make you backward to them, and heartless in them: you will have no mind of praying, meditation, or other duties, because all will seem dark to you, and you will think that every thing makes against you. 7. You rob all about you of that cheerful, encouraging example and persuasion which they should have from you, and by which you might win many souls to God. And contrarily you are a discouragement and hindrance to them. I could mention many more sinful aggravations of your denying God's graces in you on every small occasion, which methinks should make you be very tender of it, if not to avoid unnecessary trouble to yourself, yet at least to avoid sin against God.

And what I have said of evidences and assurance, I would have you understand also of your experiences. You must not make use only at the present of your experiences, but lay them up for the time to come. Nor must you tempt God so far as to expect new experiences upon every new

scruple or doubt of yours, as the Israelites expected new miracles in the wilderness, still forgetting the old. If a scholar should in his studies forget all that he hath read and learned, and all the resolutions of his doubts which in study he hath attained, and leave his understanding still as an unwritten paper, as a receptive of every mutation and new apprehension, and contrary conceit, as if he had never studied the point before, he will make but a poor proficiency, and have but a fluctuated, unsettled brain. A scholar should make all the studies of his life to compose one entire image of truth in his soul, as a painter makes every line he draws to compose one entire picture of a man; and as a weaver makes every thread to compose one web; so should you make all former examinations, discoveries, evidences, and experiences, compose one full discovery of your condition, that so you may have a settled peace of soul: and see that you tie both ends together, and neither look on your present troubled state without your former, lest you be unthankful, and unjustly discouraged; nor on your former state without observance of your present frame of heart and life, lest you deceive yourself, or grow secure. O that you could well observe this Direction! How much would it help you to escape extremes, and conduce to the settling of a well-grounded peace, and at once to the well ordering of your whole conversation!

Direct. XXVIII. 'Be very careful that you create not perplexities and terrors to your own soul, by rash misinterpretations of any passages either of Scripture, of God's providence, or of the sermons or private speeches of ministers: but resolve with patience, yea, with gladness, to suffer preachers to deal with their congregations in the most searching, serious and awakening manner, lest your weakness should be a wrong to the whole assembly, and possibly the undoing of many a sensual, drowsy or obstinate soul, who will not be convinced and awakened by a comforting way of preaching, or by any smoother or gentler means.'

Here are three dangerous enemies to your peace, which (for brevity) I warn you of together.

1. Rash misinterpretations and misapplications of Scripture. Some weak-headed, troubled Christians can scarce read a chapter, or hear one read, but they will find something which they think doth condemn them. If they read

of God's wrath and judgment, they think it is meant against them. If they read, "Our God is a consuming fire," they think presently it is themselves that must be the fuel; whereas justice and mercy have each their proper objects; the burning fire will not waste the gold, nor is water the fuel of it; but combustible matter it will presently consume. A humble soul that lies prostrate at Christ's feet, confessing its unworthiness, and bewailing its sinfulness, this is not the object of revenging justice; such a soul bringing Christ's mercies, and pleading them with God, is so far from being the fuel of this consuming fire, that he bringeth that water which will undoubtedly quench it. Yet this Scripture expression of our God, may subdue carnal security even in the best, but not dismay them or discourage them in their hopes. Another reads in Psalm l. "I will set thy sins in order before thee;" and he thinks, certainly God will deal thus by him, not considering that God chargeth only their sins upon them that charge them not by true repentance on themselves, and accept not of Christ who hath discharged them by his blood. It is the excusers, and mincers, and defenders of sin, that love not those that reprove them, and that will not avoid them, or the occasions of them, that would not be reformed, and will not be persuaded, in whose souls iniquity hath dominion, and that delight in it, it is these on whom God chargeth their sin: "For this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light; and come not to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd;" John iii. 20, 21. But for the soul that trembleth at God's word, and comes home to God with shame and sorrow, resolving to return no more to wickedness, God is so far from charging his sins upon him, that he never mentioneth them, as I told you, is evident in the case of the prodigal. He makes not a poor sinner's burden more heavy by hitting him in the teeth with his sins, but makes it the office of his Son to ease him by disburdening him.

Many more texts might be named (and perhaps it would not be lost labour) which troubled souls do misunderstand and misapply; but it would make this writing tedious, which is already swelled so far beyond my first intention.

2. The second enemy of your peace here mentioned, is, Misunderstanding and misapplying passages of providence.

Nothing more common with troubled souls, than upon every new cross and affliction that befalls them, presently to think, God takes them for hypocrites; and to question their sincerity! As if David and Job had not left them a full warning against this temptation. Do you lose your goods? So did Job. Do you lose your children? So did Job; and that in no very comfortable way. Do you lose your health? So did Job. What if your godly friends should come about you in this case, and bend all their wits and speeches to persuade you that you are but a hypocrite, as Job's friends did by him, would not this put you harder to it? Yet could Job resolve, "I will not let go mine integrity till I die." I know God's chastisements are all paternal punishments; and that Christians should search and try their hearts and ways at such times; but not conclude that they are graceless ever the more for being afflicted, seeing God chasteneth every son whom he receiveth; Heb. xii. 6, 7. And in searching after sin itself in your afflictions, be sure that you make the word, and not your sufferings, the rule to discover how far you have sinned; and let afflictions only quicken you to try by the word. How many a soul have I known that by misinterpreting providences, have in a blind jealousy, been turned quite from truth and duty, supposing it had been error and sin; and all because of their afflictions. As a foolish man in his sickness accuseth the last meat that he eat before he fell sick, though it might be the wholesomest that ever he eat, and the disease may have many causes which he is ignorant of. One man being sick, a busy seducing Papist comes to him (for it is their use to take such opportunities) and tells him, 'It is God's hand upon you for forsaking or straying from the Roman Catholic Church, and God hath sent this affliction to bring you home. All your ancestors lived and died in this church, and so must you if ever you will be saved.' The poor, jealous, affrighted sinner hearing this, and through his ignorance being unable to answer him, thinks it is even true, and presently turns Papist. In the same manner do most other sects. How many have the Antinomians and Anabaptists thus seduced! Finding a poor silly woman (for it is most common with them) to be under sad doubts and distress of soul, one tells her, 'It is God's hand on you to convince you of error, and to bring you to submit to the ordi-

nance of baptism :’ and upon this many have been rebaptized, and put their foot into the snare which I have yet seen few escape and draw back from. Another comes and tells the troubled soul, ‘It is legal preaching, and looking at something in yourself for peace and comfort, which hath brought you to this distress : as long as you follow these legal preachers, and read their books, and look at any thing in yourself, and seek assurance from marks within you, it will never be better with you. These preachers understand not the nature of free grace, nor ever tasted it themselves, and therefore they cannot preach it, but despise it. You must know that grace is so free that the covenant hath no condition : you must believe, and not look after the marks. And believing is but to be persuaded that God is reconciled to you, and hath forgiven you ; for you are justified before you were born, if you are one of the elect, and can but believe it. It is not any thing of your own, by which you can be justified ; nor is it any sin of yours that can unjustify. It is the witness of the Spirit only persuading you of your justification and adoption, that can give you assurance ; and fetching it from any thing in yourself, is but a resting on your own righteousness, and forsaking Christ.’ When the Antinomian hath but sung this ignorant charm to a poor soul as ignorant as himself, and prepared by terrors to entertain the impression, presently it (oft) takes, and the sinner without a wonder of mercy is undone. This doctrine, which subverteth the very scope of the Gospel, being entertained, subverteth his faith and obedience ; and usually the libertinism of his opinion is seen in his liberty of conscience, and licentious practices ; and his trouble of mind is cured, as a burning fever by opium, which gives him such a sleep, that he never awaketh till he be in another world. Yet these errors are so gross, and so fully against the express texts of Scripture, that if ministers would condescendingly, lovingly and familiarly deal with them and do their duty, I should hope many well-meaning souls might be recovered. Thus you see the danger of rash interpreting, and so misinterpreting providences. As such interpretations of prosperity and success delude not only the Mahometan world, and the profane world, but many that seemed godly, so many such interpretations of adversity and crosses do ; especially if the seducer be but kind and liberal to re-

lieve them in their adversity, he may do with many poor souls almost what he please.

3. The third enemy to your peace here mentioned, is, Misinterpreting or misapplying the passages of preachers in their sermons, writings or private speeches. A minister cannot deal thoroughly or seriously with any sort of sinners, but some fearful, troubled souls apply all to themselves. I must entreat you to avoid this fault, or else you will turn God's ordinances and the daily food of your souls, into bitterness and wormwood, and all through your mistakes. I think there are few ministers so preach, but you might perceive whom they mean, and they so difference as to tell you who they speak to. I confess it is a better sign of an honest heart and self-judging conscience, to say, 'He speaks now to me, this is my case;' than to say, 'He speaks now to such or such a one, this is their case.' For it is the property of hypocrites to have their eye most abroad, and in every duty to be minding most the faults of others: and you may much discern such in their prayers, in that they will fill their confessions most with other men's sins, and you may feel them all the while in the bosom of their neighbours, when you may even feel a sincere man speaking his own heart, and most opening his own bosom to God. But though self-applying and self-searching be far the better sign, yet must not any wise Christian do it mistakingly: for that may breed abundance of very sad effects. For besides the aforesaid embittering of God's ordinances to you, and so discouraging you from them, do but consider what a grief and a snare you may prove to your minister. A grief it must needs be to him who knows he should not make sad the soul of the innocent, to think that he cannot avoid it, without avoiding his duty. When God hath put two several messages in our mouths; "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him;" and "Say to the wicked, it shall be ill with him;" Isaiah iii. 10, 11. "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned;" and we speak both; will you take that as spoken to you, which is spoken to the unbeliever and the wicked? Alas, how is it possible then for us to forbear troubling you? If you will put your head under every stroke that we give against sin and sinners, how can we help it if you smart? What a sad case are we in, by such misapplications! We have but two messages

to deliver, and both are usually lost by misapplications. The wicked saith, 'I am the righteous, and therefore it shall go well with me.' The righteous saith, 'I am the wicked, and therefore it shall go ill with me.' The unbeliever saith, 'I am a believer, and therefore am justified.' The believer saith, 'I am an unbeliever, and therefore am condemned.' Nay, it is not only the loss of our preaching, but we oft do them much harm; for they are hardened that should be humbled; and they are wounded more that should be healed. A minister now must needs tell them who he means by the believer, and who by the unbeliever; who by the righteous, and who by the wicked: and yet when he hath done it as accurately, and as cautelously as he can, misapplying souls will wrong themselves by it. So that because people cannot see the distinguishing line, it therefore comes to pass that few are comforted but when ministers preach nothing else but comfort; and few humbled, but where ministers bend almost all their endeavours that way, that people can feel almost nothing else from him. But for him that equally would divide to each their portion, each one snatcheth up the part of another, and he oft misseth of profiting either; and yet this is the course that we must take.

And what a snare is this to us, as well as a grief! What if we should be so moved with compassion of your troubles, as to fit almost all our doctrine and application to you, what a fearful guilt should we draw upon our own souls!

Nay, what a snare may you thus prove to the greater part of the congregation! Alas, we have seldom past one, or two, or three troubled consciences in an auditory, (and perhaps some of their troubles be the fruit of such wilful sinning, that they have more need of greater, yet) should we now neglect all the rest of these poor souls, to preach only to you? O how many an ignorant hardhearted sinner comes before God every day! Shall we let such go away as they came, without ever a blow to awaken them and stir their hearts, when, alas, all that ever we can do is too little! When we preach you into tears and trembling, we preach them asleep! Could we speak swords, it would scarce make them feel, when you through misapplication have gone home with anguish and fears. How few of all these have been pricked at the heart, and said, "What shall we do to be saved?" Have you no pity now on such stupid souls as

these? I fear this one distemper of yours, that you cannot bear this rousing preaching, doth betray another and greater sin; look to it, I beseech you, for I think I have spied out the cause of your trouble; are you not yourself too great a stranger to poor stupid sinners? and come not among them? or pity them not as you should? And do not your duty for the saving of their souls; but think it belongs not to you but to others? Do you use to deal with servants and neighbours about you, and tell them of sin and misery, and the remedy, and seek to draw their hearts to Christ, and bring them to duty? I doubt you do little in this; (and that is sad unmercifulness;) for if you did, truly you could not choose but find such miserable ignorance, such senselessness and blockishness, such hating reproof and unwillingness to be reformed, such love of this world, and slavery to the flesh, and so little favour of Christ, grace, heaven, and the things of the Spirit, and especially such an unteachableness, untractableness (as thorns and briars) and so great a difficulty moving them an inch from what they are, that you would have been willing ever after to have ministers preach more rousingly than they do, and you would be glad for their sakes, when you heard that which might awake them and prick them to the heart. Yea, if you had tried how hard a work it is to bring worldly, formal hypocrites to see their hypocrisy, or to come over to Christ from the creature, and to be in good earnest in the business of their salvation, you would be glad to have preachers search them to the quick, and ransack their hearts, and help them against their affected and obstinate self-delusions.

Besides, you should consider that their case is far different from yours; your disease is pain and trouble, they are stark dead; you have God's favour and doubt of it, they are his enemies and never suspect it: you want comfort, and they want pardon and life: if your disease should never here be cured, it is but going more sadly to heaven, but if they be not recovered by regeneration, they must lie for ever in hell. And should we not then pity them more than you; and study more for them; and preach more for them; and rather forget you in a sermon than them? Should you not wish us so to do? Should we more regard the comforting of one, than the saving of a hundred? Nay more, we should not only neglect them, but dangerously hurt them,

if we should preach too much to the case of troubled souls; for you are not so apt to misapply passages of terror, and to take their portion, as they are apt to apply to themselves such passages for comfort, and take your portion to themselves.

I know some will say, that it is preaching Christ, and setting forth God's love, that will win them best, and terrors do but make unwilling, hypocritical professors. This makes me remember how I have heard some preachers of the times, blame their brethren for not preaching Christ to their people, when they preached the danger of rejecting Christ, disobeying him, and resisting his Spirit. Do these men think that it is no preaching Christ (when we have first many years told men the fulness of his satisfaction, the freeness and general extent of his covenant or promise, and the riches of his grace, and the incomprehensibleness of his glory, and the truth of all) to tell them afterwards the danger of refusing, neglecting and disobeying him; and of living after the flesh, and preferring the world before him; and serving mammon, and falling off in persecution, and avoiding the cross, and yielding in temptation, and quenching the Spirit, and declining from their first love, and not improving their talents, and not forgiving and loving their brethren, yea, and enemies? &c. Is none of this Gospel? nor preaching Christ? Yea, is not repentance itself (except despairing repentance) proper to the Gospel, seeing the law excludeth it, and all manner of hope? Blame me not, reader, if I be zealous against these men, that not only know not what preaching Christ is, but in their ignorance reproach their brethren for not preaching Christ, and withal condemn Christ himself and all his apostles. Do they think that Christ himself knew not what it was to preach Christ? Or that he set us a pattern too low for our imitation? I desire them soberly to read Matt. v. vi. vii. x. xxv. Rom. viii. iv. from the first verse to the fourteenth. Rom. ii. Heb. ii. iv. v. x. and then tell me whether we preach as Christ and his apostles did. But to the objection; I answer first, We do set forth God's love, and the fulness of Christ, and the sufficiency of his death and satisfaction for all, and the freeness and extent of his offer and promise of mercy, and his readiness to welcome returning sinners: this we do

first (mixing with this the discovery of their natural misery by sin, which must be first known) and next we shew them the danger of rejecting Christ and his office. 2. When we find men settled under the preaching of free grace, in a base contempt or sleepy neglect of it, preferring the world and their carnal pleasures and ease, before all the glory of heaven, and riches of Christ and grace, is it not time for us to say, "How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3. "And of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that treads under foot the blood of the covenant?" Heb. x. 26. When men grow careless and unbelieving, must we not say, "Take heed lest a promise being left, of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it?" Heb. iv. 1. 3. Hath not Christ led us, commanded us, and taught us this way? "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish," was his doctrine; Luke xiii. 3. 5. "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature:" (what is that Gospel?) "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" Mark xvi. 16. "Those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me;" Luke xix. 27. Doth any of the apostles speak more of hell-fire, and the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never is quenched, than Christ himself doth? And do not his apostles go the same way; even Paul, the great preacher of faith? (2 Thess. i. 7—9. ii. 12, &c.) What more common? Alas, what work should we make, if we should stroke and smooth all men with Antinomian language? It were the way to please all the sensual, profane multitude, but it is none of Christ's way to save their souls. I am ready to think that these men would have Christ preached as the Papist would have him prayed to; to say, 'Jesu, Jesu, Jesu,' nine times together, and this oft over, is their praying to him; and to have Christ's name oft in the preacher's mouth, some men think is the right preaching Christ.

Let me now desire you hereafter, to be glad to hear ministers awaken the profane and dead-hearted hearers, and search all to the quick, and misapply nothing to yourself; but if you think any passage doth nearly concern you, open your mind to the minister privately, when he may satisfy you more fully, and that without doing hurt to others: and con-

sider what a strait ministers are in, that have so many of so different conditions, inclinations, and conversations to preach to.

Direct. XXIX. 'Be sure you forget not to distinguish between causes of doubting of your sincerity, and causes of mere humiliation, repentance, and amendment; and do not raise doubtings and fears, where God calleth you but to humiliation, amendment, and fresh recourse to Christ.'

This rule is of so great moment to your peace, that you will have daily use for it, and can never maintain any true, settled peace without the practice of it. What more common than for poor Christians to pour out a multitude of complaints of their weaknesses, and wants, and miscarriages; and never consider all the while that there may be cause of sorrow in these, when yet there is no cause of doubting of their sincerity. I have shewed before, that in gross falls and great backslidings, doubtings will arise, and sometimes our fears and jealousies may not be without cause; but it is not ordinary infirmities, nor every sin which might have been avoided, that is just cause of doubting; nay, your very humiliation must no further be endeavoured than it tends to your recovery, and to the honouring of mercy: for it is possible that you may exceed in the measure of your griefs. You must therefore first be resolved, wherein the truth of saving grace doth consist, and then in all your failings and weaknesses first known, whether they contradict sincerity in itself, and are such as may give just cause to question your sincerity: if they be not (as the ordinary infirmities of believers are not), then you may and must be humbled for them, but you may not doubt of your salvation for them. I told you before by what marks you may discern your sincerity; that is, wherein the nature of saving faith and holiness doth consist; keep that in your eye, and as long as you find that sure and clear, let nothing make you doubt of your right to Christ and glory. But, alas! how people do contradict the will of God in this! When you have sinned, God would have you bewail your folly and unkind dealing, and fly to mercy through Christ, and this you will not do; but he would not have you torment yourselves with fears of damnation, and questioning his love, and yet this you will do. You may discern by this, that humiliation and reformation are sure of God, man's

heart is so backward to it; and that vexations, doubts and fears in true Christians that should be comfortable, are not of God, man's nature is so prone to them (though the ungodly that should fear and doubt, are as backward to it).

I think it will not be unseasonable here to lay down the particular doubts that usually trouble sincere believers, and see how far they may be just, and how far unjust and causeless; and most of them shall be from my own former experience; and such as I have been most troubled with myself, and the rest such as are incident to true Christians, and too usual with them.

Doubt 1. 'I have often heard and read in the best divines, that grace is not born with us, and therefore satan hath always possession before Christ, and keeps that possession in peace, till Christ come and bind him and cast him out; and that this is so great a work that it cannot choose but be observed, and for ever remembered by the soul where it is wrought; yea, the several steps and passages of it may be all observed: first casting down, and then lifting up; first wounding and killing, and then healing and reviving. But I have not observed the distinct parts and passages of this change in me, nay, I know of no such sudden observable change at all: I cannot remember that ever I was first killed, and then revived: nor do I know by what minister, nor at what sermon, or other means that work which is upon me was wrought: no, nor what day, or month, or year it was begun. I have slided insensibly into a profession of religion, I know not how; and therefore I fear that I am not sincere, and the work of true regeneration was never yet wrought upon my soul.'

Ans. I will lay down the full answer to this, in these propositions. 1. It is true that grace is not natural to us, or conveyed by generation. 2. Yet it is as true that grace is given to our children as well as to us. That it may be so, and is so with some, all will grant who believe that infants may be, and are saved: and that it is so with the infants of believers, I have fully proved in my Book of Baptism; but mark what grace I mean. The grace of remission of original sin, the children of all true believers have at least a high probability of, if not a full certainty; their parent accepting it for himself and them, and dedicating them to Christ, and engaging them in his covenant, so that he takes them

for his people, and they take him for their Lord and Saviour. And for the grace of inward renewing of their natures or disposition, it is a secret to us, utterly unknown whether God use to do it in infants or no. 3. God's first ordained way for the working of inward holiness is by parents' education of their children, and not by the public ministry of the word; of which more anon. 4. All godly parents do acquaint their children with the doctrine of Christ in their infancy, as soon as they are capable of receiving it, and do afterwards inculcate it on them more and more. 5. These instructions of parents are usually seconded by the workings of the Spirit, according to the capacity of the child, opening their understandings to receive it, and making an impression thereby upon the heart. 6. When these instructions and the inward workings of the Spirit are just past the preparatory part, and above the highest step of common grace, and have attained to special saving grace, is ordinarily undiscernible: and therefore, as I have shewed already, in God's usual way of working grace, men cannot know the just day or time when they began to be in the state of grace. And though men that have long lived in profaneness, and are changed suddenly, may conjecture near at the time; yet those that God hath been working on early in their youth, yea, or afterwards by slow degrees, cannot know the time of their first receiving the Spirit. 8. The memories of all men are so slippery, and one thought so suddenly thrust out by another, that many a thousand souls forget those particular workings which they have truly felt. 9. The memories of children are far weaker than of others; and therefore it is less probable that all the Spirit's workings should by them be remembered. 10. And the motions of grace are so various, sometimes stirring one affection, and sometimes another, sometimes beginning with smaller motions, and then moving more strongly and sensibly, that it is usual for later motions which are more deeply affecting, to make us overlook all the former, or take them for nothing. 11. God dealeth very variously with his chosen in their conversion, as to the accidentals and circumstantials of the work. Some he calleth not home till they have run a long race in the way of rebellion, in open drunkenness, swearing, worldliness and derision of holiness: these he usually humbleth more deeply, and they can better observe the several steps of the

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Spirit in the work ; (and yet not always neither). Others he so restraineth in their youth, that though they have not saving grace, yet they are not guilty of any gross sins, but have a liking to the people and ways of God : and yet he doth not savingly convert them till long after. It is much harder for these to discern the time or manner of their conversion ; yet usually some conjectures they may make : and usually their humiliation is not so deep. Others, as is said, have the saving workings of the Spirit in their very childhood, and these can least of all discern the certain time or order. The ordinary way of God's dealing with those that are children of godly parents, and have good education, is, by giving them some liking of godly persons and ways, some conscience of sin, some repentance and recourse by prayer to God in Christ for mercy ; yet youthful lusts and folly, and ill company, do usually much stifle it, till at last, by some affliction, or sermon, or book, or good company, God setteth home the work, and maketh them more resolute and victorious Christians. These persons now can remember that they had convictions, and stirring consciences when they were young, and the other forementioned works, perhaps they can remember some more notable rousings and awakenings long after, and perhaps they have had many such fits and steps, and the work hath stood at this pass for a long time, even many years together. But at which of all these changes it was that the soul began to be savingly sincere, I think is next to an impossibility to discern. According to that experience which I have had of the state of Christians, I am forced to judge the most of the children of the godly that ever are renewed, are renewed in their childhood, or much towards it then done, and that among forty Christians there is not one that can certainly name the month in which his soul first began to be sincere ; and among a thousand Christians, I think not one can name the hour. The sermon which awakened them, they may name, but not the hour when they first arrived at a saving sincerity.

My advice therefore to all Christians, is this : Find Christ by his Spirit dwelling in your hearts, and then never trouble yourselves, though you know not the time or manner of his entrance. Do you value Christ above the world, and resolve to choose him before the world, and perform

these resolutions? Then need you not doubt but the Spirit of Jesus is victorious in you.

Doubt 2. 'But I have oft read and heard, that a man cannot come to Christ till he feel the heavy burden of sin. It is the weary and heavy-laden that Christ calleth to him. He bindeth up only the brokenhearted; he is a Physician only to those that feel themselves sick; he brings men to heaven by the gates of hell. They must be able to say, I am in a lost condition, and in a state of damnation, and if I should die this hour I must perish for ever, before Christ will deliver them. God will throw away the blood of his Son on those that feel not their absolute necessity of it, and that they are undone without it. But it was never thus with me to this day.'

Ans. 1. You must distinguish carefully between repentance as it is in the mind and will, and as it shews itself in the passion of sorrow. All that have saving interest in Christ, have their judgments and wills so far changed, that they know they are sinners, and that there is no way to the obtaining of pardon and salvation but by Christ, and the free mercy of God in him; and thereupon they are convinced that if they remain without the grace of Christ, they are undone for ever. Whereupon they understanding that Christ and mercy is offered to them in the Gospel, do heartily and thankfully accept the offer, and would not be without Christ, or change their hopes of his grace for all the world, and do resolve to wait upon him for the further discovery of his mercy, and the workings of his Spirit, in a constant and conscionable use of his means, and to be ruled by him, to their power. Is it not thus with you? If it be, here is the life and substance of repentance, which consisteth in this change of the mind and heart, and you have no cause to doubt of the truth of it, for want of more deep and passionate humiliation. 2. I have told you before, how uncertain and inconstant the passionate effects of grace are, and how unfit to judge by, and given you several reasons of it. Yet I doubt not but some work upon the affections there is, as well as on the will and understanding; but with so great diversity of manner and degrees, that it is not safe judging by it only or chiefly. Is there no degree of sorrow or trouble that hath touched your heart for your sin or misery? If your affections were no whit stirred, you would

hardly be moved to action, to use means, or avoid iniquity, much less would you so oft complain as you do. 3. If God prevented those heinous sins in the time of your unregeneracy, which those usually are guilty of who are called to so deep a degree of sorrow, you should rather be thankful that your wound was not deeper, than troubled that the cure cost you no dearer. Look well whether the cure be wrought in the change of your heart and life from the world to God by Christ, and then you need not be troubled that it was wrought so easily. 4. Were you not acquainted with the evil of sin, and danger and misery of sinners, in your very childhood, and also of the necessity of a Saviour, and that Christ died to save all sinners that will believe and repent? And hath not this fastened on your heart, and been working in you by degrees ever since? If it be so, then you cannot expect that you should have such deep terrors as those that never hear of sin and Christ till the news come upon them suddenly in the ripeness of their sin. There is a great deal of difference betwixt the conversion of a Jew, or any other infidel, who is brought on the sudden to know the doctrine of sin, misery and salvation, by Christ; and the conversion of a professor of the Christian religion, who hath known this doctrine in some sort from his childhood, and who hath a sound religion, though he be not sound in his religion, and so needs not a conversion to a sound faith, but only to a soundness in the faith. The suddenness of the news must needs make those violent commotions and changes in the one, which cannot ordinarily be expected in the other, who is acquainted so early with the truth, and by such degrees. 5. But suppose you heard nothing of sin and misery, and a Redeemer in your childhood, or at least understood it not (which yet is unlikely), yet let me ask you this: Did not that preacher, or that book, or whatever other means God used for your conversion, reveal to you misery and mercy both together? Did not you hear and believe that Christ died for sin, as soon as you understood your sin and misery? Sure I am that the Scripture reveals both together; and so doth every sound preacher, and every sound writer (notwithstanding that the slanderous Antinomians do shamefully proclaim that we preach not Christ, but the law). This being so, you must easily apprehend that it must needs abate very much of the terror, which would else have been

unavoidable. If you had read or heard that you were a sinner, and the child of hell, and of God's wrath, and that there was no remedy, (which is such a preaching of the law, as we must not use to any in the world, nor any since the first promise to Adam, must receive); yea, or if you had heard nothing of a Saviour for a year, or a day, or an hour after you had heard that you were an heir of hell, and for the remedy had been but concealed from you, though not denied (which ordinarily must not be done), then you might in all likelihood have found some more terrors of soul that hour. But when you heard that your sin was pardonable, as soon as you heard that you were a sinner, and heard that your misery had a sufficient remedy provided, if you would accept it, or at least that it was not remediless, and this as soon as you heard of that misery, what wonder is it if this exceedingly abate your fears and troubles! Suppose two men go to visit two several neighbours that have the plague, and one of them saith 'It is the plague that is on you; you are but a dead man.' The other saith to the other sick person, 'It is the plague that you have; but here is our physician at the next door that hath a receipt that will cure it as infallibly and as easily as if it were but the prick of a pin, he hath cured thousands, and never failed one that took his receipt, but if you will not send to him, and trust him, and take his receipt, there is no hopes of you.' Tell me now whether the first of these sick persons be not like to be more troubled than the other? And whether it will not remove almost all the fears and troubles of the latter, to hear of a certain remedy as soon as he heareth of the disease? Though some trouble he must needs have to think that he hath a disease in itself so desperate or loathsome. Nay, let me tell you, so the cure be but well done, the less terrors and despairing fear you were put upon, the more credit is it to your physician and his apothecary, Christ and the preacher, or instrument, that did the work; and therefore you should rather praise your physician, than question the cure.

Doubt 3. 'But it is common with all the world to consent to the religion that they are bred up in, and somewhat affected with it, and to make conscience of obeying the precepts of it. So do the Jews in theirs; the Mahometans in

theirs. And I fear it is no other work on my soul but the mere force of education, that maketh me religious, and that I had never that great renewing work of the Spirit upon my soul; and so that all my religion is but mere opinion, or notions in my brain.'

Answ. 1. All the religions in the world, besides the Christian religion, have either much error and wickedness mixed with some truth of God, or they contain some lesser parcel of that truth alone (as the Jews); only the Christian religion hath that whole truth which is saving. Now so much of God's truth as there is in any of these religions, so much it may work good effects upon their souls; as the knowledge of the Godhead, and that God is holy, good, just, merciful, and that he sheweth them much undeserved mercy in his daily providences, &c. But mark these two things, 1. That all persons of false religions do more easily and greedily embrace the false part of their religion than the true; and that they are zealous for, and practise with all their might, because their natural corruption doth befriend it, and is as combustible fuel for the fire of hell to catch in; but that truth of God which is mixed with their error, if it be practical, they fight against it, and abhor it while they hold it, because it crosseth their lusts, insomuch that it is usually but some few of the more convinced and civil that God in providence maketh the main instruments of continuing those truths of his in that part of the wicked world. For we find that even among Pagans, the profaner and more sensual sort did deride the better sort, as our profane Christians do the godly whom they called Puritans. 2. Note, That the truth of God which in these false religions is still acknowledged, is so small a part, and so oppressed by errors, that it is not sufficient to their salvation (that is, to give them any sound hope), nor is it sufficient to make such clear, and deep, and powerful impressions in their minds, as may make them holy or truly heavenly, or may overcome in them the interest of the world and the flesh.

This being so, you may see great reason why a Turk or a heathen may be zealous for his religion without God's Spirit, or any true sanctification, when yet you cannot be so truly zealous for yours without it. Indeed the speculative part of our religion, separated from the practical, or from the hard and self-denying part of the practical, many a wicked

man may be zealous for ; as to maintain the Godhead, or that God is merciful, &c. Or to maintain against the Jews that Jesus is the Christ ; or against the Turks, that he is the only redeemer and teacher of the church ; or against the Papists, that all the Christians in the world are Christ's church as well as the Romans ; and against the Socinians and Arians that Christ is God, &c. But this is but a small part of our religion ; nor doth this, or any heathenish zeal, sanctify the heart, or truly mortify the flesh, or overcome the world. They may condemn life, and cast it away for their pride and vain-glory ; but not for the hopes of a holy and blessed life with God. This is but the prevalency of one corruption against another, or rather of vice against nature. There is a common grace of God that goeth along with common truths, and according to the measure of their obedience to the truth, such was the change it wrought ; which was done by common truths, and common grace together, but not by their false mixtures at all. But God hath annexed his special grace only to the special truths of the Gospel or Christian religion. If therefore God do by common grace, work a great change on a heathen, by the means of common truths, and do by his special grace work a greater and special change on you, by the means of the special truths of the Gospel, have you any reason hereupon to suspect your condition ? Or should you not rather both admire that providence and common grace which is manifested without the church, and humbly, rejoicingly, and thankfully embrace that special saving grace, which is manifested to yourself above them ?

2. And for that which you speak of education, you have as much cause to doubt of your conversion, because it was wrought by public preaching, as because it was wrought by education. For, 1. Both are by the Gospel : for it is the Gospel that your parents taught you, as well as which the preacher teacheth you. 2. I have shewed you, that if parents did not shamefully neglect their duties, the word publicly preached would not be the ordinary instrument of regeneration to the children of true Christians, but would only build them up, and direct them in the faith, and in obedience. The proof is very plain : If we should speak nothing of the interest of our infants in the covenant grace, upon the conditional force of their parents' faith, nor of their

baptism ; yet, Deut. vi. Ephes. vi. and oft in the Proverbs, you may find, that it is God's strict command, that parents should teach God's word to their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; yea, with a prediction or half promise, that if we " train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he shall not depart from it ;" Prov. xxii. 6. Now it is certain that God will usually bless that which he appointeth to be the usual means, if it be rightly used. For he hath appointed no means to be used in vain.

I hope therefore by this time you see, that instead of being troubled, that the work was done on your soul by the means of education : 1. You had more reason to be troubled if it had been done first by the public preaching of the word ; for it should grieve you at the heart to think, 1. That you lived in an unregenerate state so long, and spent your childhood in vanity and sin, and thought not seriously on God and your salvation, for so many years together. 2. And that you or your parent's sin should provoke God so long to withdraw his Spirit and deny you his grace. 3. You may see also what inconceivable thanks you owe to God, who made education the means of your early change. 1. In that he prevented so many and grievous sins which else you would have been guilty of. (And you may read in David's and Manasseh's case, that even pardoned sins have oftentimes very sad effects left behind them.) 2. That you have enjoyed God's Spirit and love so much longer than else you would have done. 3. That iniquity took not so deep rooting in you, as by custom it would have done. 4. That the devil cannot glory of that service which you did him, as else he might ; and that the church is not so much the worse, as else it might have been by the mischief you would have done ; and that you need not all your days look back with so much trouble, as else you must, upon the effects of your ill doing ; nor with Paul, to think of one Stephen ; yea, many saints, in whose blood you first embrued your hands ; and to cry out, ' I was born out of due time. I am not worthy to be called a Christian, because I persecuted the church of God. I was mad against them, and persecuted them into several cities. I was sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Would you rather that God had permitted you to do this ? 5. And

methinks it should be a comfort to you, that your own father was the instrument of your spiritual good ; that he that was the means of your generation, was the means of your regeneration, both because it will be a double comfort to your parents, and because it will endear and engage you to them in a double bond. For my part, I know not what God did secretly in my heart, before I had the use of memory and reason ; but the first good that ever I felt on my soul, was from the counsels and teachings of my own father in my childhood ; and I take it now for a double mercy, being more glad that he was the instrument to do me good, than if it had been the best preacher in the world. How foul an oversight is it then, that you should be troubled at one of the choicest mercies of your life, yea, that your life was capable of, and for which you owe to God such abundant thanks !

Doubt 4. ‘ But my great fear is, that the life of grace is not yet within me, because I am so void of spiritual sense and feeling. Methinks I am in spiritual things as dead as a block, and my heart as hard as a rock, or the nether millstone. Grace is a principle of new life, and life is a principle of sense and motion ; it causeth vigour and activity. Such should I have in duty, if I had the life of grace. But I feel the great curse of a dead heart within me. God seems to withdraw his quickening Spirit, and to forsake me ; and to give me up to the hardness of my heart. If I were in covenant with him, I should feel the blessing of the covenant within me ; the hard heart would be taken out of my body, and a heart of flesh, a soft heart would be given to me. But I cannot weep one tear for my sins. I can think on the blood of Christ, and of my bloody sins that caused it, and all will not wring one tear from mine eyes ; and therefore, I fear, that my soul is yet destitute of the life of grace.’

Ans. 1. A soft heart consisteth in two things. 1. That the will be persuadable, tractable, and yielding to God, and pliable to his will. 2. That the affections or passions be somewhat moved herewithal about spiritual things. Some degree more or less of the latter, doth concur with the former ; but I have told you, that it is the former, wherein the heart and life of grace doth lie, and that the latter is very various, and uncertain to try by. Many do much overlook the Scripture meaning of the word hardheartedness. Mark

it up and down concerning the Israelites, who are so oft charged by Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets, to be hardhearted, or to harden their hearts, or stiffen their necks ; and you will find that the most usual meaning of the Holy Ghost is this, They were an intractable, disobedient, obstinate people ; or as the Greek word in the New Testament signifieth, which we often translate unbelieving, they were an unpersuadable people ; no saying would serve them. They set light by God's commands, promises, and severest threatenings, and judgments themselves ; nothing would move them to forsake their sins, and obey the voice of God. You shall find that hardness of heart is seldom put for want of tears, or a melting, weeping disposition ; and never at all for the want of such tears, where the will is tractable and obedient. I pray you examine yourself then according to this rule. God offereth his love in Christ, and Christ with all his benefits to you. Are you willing to accept them ? He commandeth you to worship him, and use his ordinances, and love his people, and others, and to forsake your known iniquities, so far that they may not have dominion over you. Are you willing to this ? He commandeth you to take him for your God, and Christ for your Redeemer, and stick to him for better and worse, and never forsake him. Are you willing to do this ? If you have a stiff, rebellious heart, and will not accept of Christ and grace, and will rather let go Christ than the world, and will not be persuaded from your known iniquities, but are loath to leave them, and love not to be reformed, and will not set upon those duties as you are able, which God requireth, and you are fully convinced of, then are you hardhearted in the Scripture sense. But if you are glad to have Christ with all your heart, upon the terms that he is offered to you in the Gospel, and you do walk daily in the way of duty as you can, and are willing to pray, and willing to hear and wait on God in his ordinances, and willing to have all God's graces formed within you, and willing to let go your most profitable and sweetest sins, and it is your daily desires, O that I could seek God, and do his will more faithfully, zealously, and pleasingly than I do ! O that I were rid of this body of sin ! These carnal, corrupt, and worldly inclinations, and that I were as holy as the best of God's saints on earth ! And if when it comes to practice, whether you

should obey or no, though some unwillingness to duty, and willingness to sin be in you, you are offended at it, and the greater bent of your will is for God, and it is but the lesser which is towards sin, and therefore the world and flesh do not lead you captive, and you live not wilfully in avoidable sins, nor at all in gross sin. I say, if it be thus with you, then you have the blessing of a soft heart, a heart of flesh, a new heart; for it is a willing, obedient, tractable heart, opposed to obstinacy in sin, which Scripture calleth a soft heart. And then for the passionate part, which consisteth in lively feelings of sin, misery, mercy, &c. and in weeping for sin I shall say but this: 1. Many an unsanctified person hath very much of it, which yet are desperately hardhearted sinners. It dependeth far more on the temper of the body, than of the grace in the soul. Women usually can weep easily (and yet not all), and children, and old men. Some complexions incline to it, and others not. Many can weep at a passion-sermon, or any moving duty, and yet will not be persuaded to obedience; these are hardhearted sinners for all their tears. 2. Many a tender, godly person cannot weep for sin, partly through the temper of their minds, which are more judicious and solid, and less passionate; but mostly from the temper of their bodies, which dispose them not that way. 3. Deepest sorrows seldom cause tears, but deep thoughts of heart; as greatest joys seldom cause laughter, but inward pleasure. I will tell you how you shall know whose heart is truly sorrowful for sin, and tender; he that would be at the greatest cost or pains to be rid of sin, or that he had not sinned. You cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have to be rid of sin; you could wish when you dishonoured God by sin, that you had spent that time in suffering rather; and if it were to do again on the same terms and inducements, you would not do it; nay, you would live a beggar contentedly, so you might fully please God, and never sin against him, and are content to pinch your flesh, and deny your worldly interest for the time to come, rather than wilfully disobey. This is a truly tender heart. On the other side, another can weep to think of his sin; and yet if you should ask him, What wouldst thou give, or what wouldst thou suffer, so thou hadst not sinned, or that thou mightest sin no more? Alas, very little. For the next time that he is put to it, he will

rather venture on the sin, than venture on a little loss, or danger, or disgrace in the world, or deny his craving flesh its pleasures. This is a hardhearted sinner. The more you would part with to be rid of sin, or the greatest cost you would be at for that end, the more repentance have you, and true tenderness of heart. Alas, if men should go to heaven according to their weeping, what abundance of children and women would be there for one man! I will speak truly my own case. This doubt lay heavy many a year on my own soul, when yet I would have given all that I had to be rid of sin, but I could not weep a tear for it. Nor could I weep for the death of my dearest friends, when yet I would have bought their lives, had it been God's will, at a dearer rate than many that could weep for them ten times as much. And now since my nature is decayed, and my body languished in consuming weakness, and my head more moistened, and my veins filled with phlegmatic, watery blood, now I can weep; and I find never the more tenderheartedness in myself than before. And yet to this day so much remains of my old disposition, that I could wring all the money out of my purse, easier than one tear out of my eyes, to save a friend, or rescue them from evil: when I see divers that can weep for a dead friend, that would have been at no great cost to save their lives. 5. Besides, as Dr. Sibbs saith, "There is oft sorrow for sin in us, when it doth not appear; it wanteth but some quickening word to set it a foot. It is the nature of grief to break out into tears most, when sorrow hath some vent, either when we use some expostulating, aggravating terms with ourselves, or when we are opening our hearts and case to a friend; then sorrow will often shew itself that did not before. 6. Yet do I not deny, but that our want of tears, and tender affections, and heartmeltings, are our sins. For my part, I see exceeding cause to bewail it greatly in myself, that my soul is not raised to a higher pitch of tender sensibility of all spiritual things than it is. I doubt not but it should be the matter of our daily confession and complaint to God, that our hearts are so dull and little affected with his sacred truths, and our own sins. But this is the scope of all my speech, Why do not you distinguish between matter of sorrow, and matter of doubting? No question but you should lament your dulness and stupidity, and use all God's means for the quickening of your affections, and

to get the most lively frame of soul; but must it cause you to doubt of your sincerity, when you cannot obtain this? Then will you never have a settled peace or assurance for many days together, for aught I know. I would ask you but this, Whether you are willing or unwilling of all that hardness, insensibleness, and dulness which you complain of? If you are willing of it, what makes you complain of it? If you are unwilling, it seems your will is so far sound; and it is the will that is the seat of the life of grace which we must try by. And was not Paul's case the same with yours, when he saith, "The good which I would do, I do not; and when I would do good, evil is present with me;" Rom. vii. 19. I know Paul speaks not of gross sins, but ordinary infirmities. And I have told you before, that the liveliness and sensibility of the passions or affections, is a thing that the will, though sanctified, cannot fully command or excite at its pleasure. A sanctified man cannot grieve or weep for sin when he will, or so much as he will. He cannot love, joy, be zealous, &c. when he will. He may be truly willing, and not able. And is not this your case? And doth not Paul make it the case of all Christians? "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would;" Gal. v. 17. Take my counsel therefore in this, if you love not self-deceiving and disquietness. Search whether you can say unfeignedly, 'I would with all my heart have Christ and his quickening and sanctifying Spirit, and his softening grace, to bring my hard heart to tenderness, and my dull and blockish soul to a lively frame! O that I could attain it?' And if you can truly say thus, Bless God that hath given you saving sincerity; and then let all the rest of your dulness, and deadness, and hardheartedness be matter of daily sorrow to you, and spare not, so it be in moderation, but let it be no matter of doubting. Confess it, complain of it, pray against it, and strive against it; but do not deny God's grace in you for it.

And here let me mind you of one thing, That it is a very ill distemper of spirit, when a man can mourn for nothing, but what causeth him to doubt of his salvation. It is a great corruption, if when your doubts are resolved, and you are persuaded of your salvation, if then you cease all your humiliation and sorrow for your sin; for you must sorrow that

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you have in you such a body of death, and that which is so displeasing to God, and are able to please and enjoy him no more, though you were never so certain of the pardon of sin, and of salvation.

7. Lastly, Let me ask you one question more; What is the reason that you are so troubled for want of tears for your sin? Take heed lest there lie some corruption in this trouble that you do not discern. If it be only because your deadness and dulness is your sin, and you would fain have your soul in that frame, in which it may be fittest to please God and enjoy him; then I commend and encourage you in your trouble. But take heed lest you should have any conceit of a meritoriousness in your tears; for that would be a more dangerous sin than your want of tears. And if it be for want of a sign of grace, and because a dry eye is a sign of an unregenerate soul, I have told you, it is not so, except where it only seconds an impenitent heart, and comes from, or accompanieth an unrenewed will, and a prevailing unwillingness to turn to God by Christ. Shew me, if you can, where the Scripture saith, He that cannot weep for sin, shall not be saved, or hath no true grace. Is not your complaint in this the very same that the most eminent Christians have used in all times? That most blessed, holy man, Mr. Bradford, who sacrificed his life in the flames against Romish abominations, was wont to subscribe his spiritual letters (indited by the breath of the Spirit of God) thus: 'The most miserable, hardhearted sinner, John Bradford.'

Doubt 5. 'O but I am not willing to good, and therefore I fear that even my will itself is yet unchanged: I have such a backwardness and undisposedness to duty, especially secret prayer, meditation, and self-examination, and reproving and exhorting sinners, that I am fain to force myself to it against my will. It is no delight that I find in these duties that brings me to them, but only I use violence with myself, and am fain to pull myself down on my knees, because I know it is a duty, and I cannot be saved without it; but I am no sooner on my knees, but I have a motion to rise, or be short, and am weary of it, and find no great miss of duty when I do omit it.'

Answ. This shews that your soul is sick, when your meat goes so much against your stomach that you are fain to force it down: and sickness may well cause you to com-

plain to God and man. But what is this to deadness ! The dead cannot force down their meat, nor digest it at all. It seems by this, that you are sanctified but in a low degree, and your corruption remains in some strength ; and let that be your sorrow, and the overcoming of it be your greatest care and business : but should you therefore say that you are unsanctified ? It seems that you have still the flesh lusting against the Spirit, that you cannot do the good you would. When you would pray with delight and unweariedness, the flesh draws back, and the devil is hindering you. And is it not so in too great a measure with the best on earth ? Remember what Christ said to his own apostles, when they should have done him one of their last services, as to the attendance of his body on earth, and should have comforted him in his agony, they are all asleep. Again and again he comes to them, and findeth them asleep : Christ is praying and sweating blood, and they are still sleeping, though he warned them to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation. But what doth God say to them for it ? Why, he useth this same distinction between humiliation for sin, and doubting of sincerity and salvation, and he helps them to the former, and helps them against the latter. “ Could ye not watch with me one hour ? ” saith he. There he convinceth them of the sin, that they may be humbled for it. “ The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, ” saith he. There he utterly resisteth their doubtings, or preventeth them ; shewing them wherein sincere grace consisteth, even in the spirit’s willingness ; and telling them that they had that grace ; and then telling them whence came their sin, even from the weakness of the flesh.

2. I have shewed you that as every man’s will is but partly sanctified (as to the degree of holiness) and so far as it is imperfect, it will be unwilling ; so that there is something in the duties of secret prayer, meditation and reproof, which makes most men more backward to them than other duties. The last doth so cross our fleshly interests ; and the two former are so spiritual, and require so pure and spiritual a soul, and set a man so immediately before the living God, as if we were speaking to him face to face, and have nothing of external pomp to draw us, that it is no wonder, if while there is flesh within us, we are backward to them ! Especially while we are so unacquainted with God, and

while strangeness and consciousness of sin doth make us draw back: besides that, the devil will more busily hinder us here than anywhere.

3. The question, therefore, is not, Whether you have an unwillingness and backwardness to good: for so have all. Nor yet, Whether you have any cold ineffectual wishes: for so have the ungodly. But, Whether your willingness be not more than your unwillingness: and in that, 1. It must not be in every single act of duty; for a godly man may be actually more unwilling to a duty at this particular time, than willing, and thereupon may omit it: but it must be about your habitual willingness, manifested in ordinary, actual willingness. 2. You must not exclude any of those motives which God hath given you to make you willing to duty. He hath commanded it, and his authority should move you. He hath threatened you, and therefore fear should move you; or else he would never have threatened. He hath made promises of reward, and therefore the hope of that should move you. And therefore you may perceive here, what a dangerous mistake it is to think that we have no grace, except our willingness to duty be without God's motives, from a mere love to the duty itself, or to its effect. Nay, it is a dangerous Antinomian mistake to imagine, that it is our duty to be willing to good, without these motives of God; I say, To take it so much as for our duty, to exclude God's motives, though we should not judge of our grace by it. For it is but an accusation of Christ (and his law) who hath ordained these motives of punishment and reward, to be his instruments to move the soul to duty. Let me therefore put the right question to you, Whether all God's motives laid together and considered, the ordinary prevailing part of your will, be not rather for duty than against it? This you will know by your practice. For if the prevailing part be against duty, you will not do it; if it be for duty, you will ordinarily perform it, though you cannot do it so well as you would. And then you may see that your backwardness and remaining unwillingness must still be matter of humiliation and resistance to you, but not matter of doubting. Nay, thank God that enableth you to pull down yourself on your knees when you are unwilling; for what is that but the prevailing of your willingness against your unwillingness? Should your unwillingness once pre-

vail, you would turn your back upon the most acknowledged duties.

Doubt 6. 'But I am afraid that it is only slavish fear of hell, and not the love of God, that causeth me to obey; and if it were not for this fear, I doubt whether I should not quite give over all. And perfect love casteth out fear.'

Answ. I have answered this already. Love will not be perfect in this life. In the life to come it will cast out all fear of damnation; and all fear that drives the soul from God, and all fear of men, (which is meant in Rev. xxi. 8. where the fearful and unbelievers are condemned; that is, those that fear men more than God). And that 1 John iv. 17, 18. speaketh of a tormenting fear, which is it that I am persuading you from, and consisteth in terrors of soul, upon an apprehension that God will condemn you. But it speaketh not of a filial fear, nor of a fear lest we should by forsaking God, or by yielding to temptation, lose the crown of life, and so perish; as long as this is not a tormenting fear, but a cautelous, preserving, preventing fear. Besides the text plainly saith, "It is that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that love casteth out this fear;" and at that day of judgment, love will have more fully overcome it. It is a great mistake to think that filial fear is only the fear of temporal chastisement, and that all fear of hell is slavish. Even filial fear is a fear of hell; but with this difference. A son (if he know himself to be a son) hath such a persuasion of his father's love to him, that he knows he will not cast him off, except he should be so vile as to renounce his father; which he is moderately fearful or careful, lest by temptation he should be drawn to do, but not distrustfully fearful, as knowing the helps and mercies of his father. But a slavish fear, is, when a man having no apprehensions of God's love, or willingness to shew him mercy, doth look that God should deal with him as a slave, and destroy him whenever he doth amiss. It is this slavish tormenting fear which I spend all this writing against. But yet a great deal, even of this slavish fear, may be in those sons, that know not themselves to be sons.

But suppose you were out of all fear of damnation; do not belie your own heart, and tell me, Had you not rather be holy than unholy; pleasing to God than displeasing? And would not the hope of salvation draw you from sin to duty,

without the fear of damnation in hell? But you will say, 'That is still mercenary, and as bad as slavish fears.' I answer, 'Not so, this hope of salvation is the hope of enjoying God, and living in perfect pleasingness to him, and pleasure in him in glory; and the desire of this is a desire of love: it is love to God that makes you desire him, and hope to enjoy him.'

Lastly, I say again take heed of separating what God hath joined. If God, by putting in your nature the several passions of hope, fear, love, &c. and by putting a holiness into these passions, by sanctifying grace, and by putting both promises and dreadful threatenings into his word: I say, if God by all these means hath given you several motives to obedience, take heed of separating them. Do not once ask your heart such a question, 'Whether it would obey if there were no threatening, and so no fear?' Nor on the other side, do not let fear do all, without love. Doubtless, the more love constraineth to duty, the better it is; and you should endeavour with all your might that you might feel more of the force of love in your duties: but do you not mark how you cherish that corruption that you complain of? Your doubts and tormenting fears are the things that love should cast out. Why then do you entertain them? If you say, 'I cannot help it:' why then do you cherish them, and own them, and plead and dispute for them? and say you do well to doubt, and you have cause? Will this ever cast out tormenting fears? Do you not know that the way to cast them out, is, not to maintain them by distrustful thoughts or words; but to see their sinfulness, and abhor them, and to get more high thoughts of the lovingkindness of God, and the tender mercies of the Redeemer, and the unspeakable love that he hath manifested in his sufferings for you, and so the love of God may be more advanced and powerful in your soul, and may be able to cast out your tormenting fears. Why do you not do this instead of doubting? If tormenting fears and doubtings be a sin, why do you not make conscience of them, and bewail it that you have been so guilty of them? Will you therefore doubt because you have slavish fears? Why that is to doubt because you doubt; and to fear because you fear; and so to sin still because you have sinned. Consider well of the folly of this course.

Doubt 7. 'But I am not able to believe; and without faith there is no pleasing God, nor hope of salvation; I fear unbelief will be my ruin.'

Answ. 1. I have answered this doubt fully before. It is grounded on a mistake of the nature of true faith. You think that faith is the believing that you are in God's favour, and that you are justified; but properly this is no faith at all, but only assurance, which is sometimes a fruit of faith, and sometimes never in this life obtained by a believer. Faith consisteth of two parts. 1. Assent to the truth of the Word. 2. Acceptance of Christ as he is offered, which immediately produceth a trusting on Christ for salvation, and consent to be governed by him, and resolution to obey him; which in the fullest sense are also acts of faith. Now do not you believe the truth of the Gospel? And do you not accept of Christ as he is offered therein? If you are truly willing to have Christ as he is offered, I dare say you are a true believer. If you be not willing, for shame never complain. Men use rather to speak against those that they are unwilling of, than complain of their absence, and that they cannot enjoy them.

2. However, seeing you complain of unbelief, in the name of God do not cherish it, and plead for it, and by your own cogitations fetch in daily matter to feed it; but do more in detestation of it, as well as complain.

Doubt 8. 'But I am a stranger to the witness of the Spirit, and the joy of the Holy Ghost, and communion with God, and therefore how can I be a true believer?'

Answ. 1. Feeding your doubts and perplexities, and arguing for them, is not a means to get the testimony and joy of the Spirit, but rather studying with all saints to know the love of God which passeth knowledge, to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of his love; and seeking to understand the things that are given you of God. Acknowledge God's general love to mankind, both in his gracious nature, and common providences, and redemption by Christ, and deny not his special mercies to yourself, but dwell in the study of the riches of grace, and that is the way to come to the joy of the Holy Ghost. 2. I have told you before what the witness of the Spirit is, and what is the ordinary mistake herein. If you have the graces and holy operations of the Spirit, you have the witness of

the Spirit, whether you know it or not. 3. If by your own doubtings you have deprived yourself of the joy of the Holy Ghost, bewail it, and do so no more; but do not therefore say you have not the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost often works regeneration and holiness before he works any sensible joys. 4. You have some hope of salvation by Christ left in you: you are not yet in utter despair; and is it no comfort to you to think that you have yet any hope? And are not quite past all remedy? It may be your sorrows may so cloud it that you take no notice of it; but I know you cannot have the least hope without some answerable comfort. And may not that comfort be truly the joy of the Holy Ghost? 5. And for communion with God let me ask you; Have you no recourse to him by prayer in your straits? Do you not wait at his mouth for the law and direction of your life? Have you received no holy desires, or other graces from him? Nay, are you sure that you are not a member of Christ, who is one with him? How can you then say, that you have no communion with him? Can there be communication of prayer and obedience from you; yea, your ownself delivered up to Christ; and a communication of any life of grace from God, by Christ and the Spirit? And all this without communion? It cannot be. Many a soul hath most near communion with Christ that knows it not.

Doubt 9. 'I have not the spirit of prayer: when I should pour out my soul to God, I have neither bold access, nor matter of prayer, nor words.'

Answ. Do you know what the spirit of prayer is? It containeth, 1. Desires of the soul after the things we want, especially Christ and his graces. 2. An addressing ourselves to God with these desires, that we may have help and relief from him. Have not you both these? Do you not desire Christ and grace, justification and sanctification? Do you not look to God as him who alone is able to supply your wants, and bids you ask that you may receive? Do you utterly despair of help, and so seek to none? Or do you make your addresses by prayer to any but God? But perhaps you look at words and matter to dilate upon, that you may be able to hold out in a long speech to God, and you think that it is the effect of the spirit of prayer. But where do you find that in God's word? I confess that in many, and most, the Spirit which helpeth to desires, doth

also help to some kind of expressions ; because if a man be of able natural parts, and have a tongue to express his own mind, the promoting of holy desires will help men to expressions. For a full soul is hardly hindered from venting itself: and experience teacheth us, that the Spirit's inflaming the heart with holy affections, doth very much furnish both the invention and expression. But this is but accidental and uncertain ; for those that are either men of unready tongues, or that are so ill bred among the rude vulgar, that they want fit expressions of their own minds, or that are of over-bashful dispositions, or especially that are of small knowledge, and of little and short acquaintance with those that should teach them to pray by their example, or that have been but of short standing in the school of Christ, such a man may have the spirit of prayer many a year, and never be able, in full expressions of his own, to make known his wants to God ; no, nor in good and tolerable sense and language, before others to speak to God, from his own invention. A man may know all those articles of the faith that are of flat necessity to salvation, and yet not be able to find matter or words for the opening of his heart to God at length. I would advise such to frequent the company of those that can teach and help them in prayer, and neglect not to use the smallest parts they have, especially in secret, between God and their own souls, where they need not, so much as in public, to be regardful of expressions ; and in the mean time to learn a prayer from some book, that may most fitly express their necessities ; or to use the book itself in prayer, if they distrust their memories, not resolving to stick here, and make it a means of indulging their laziness and negligence, much less to reproach and deride those that express their desires to God from the present sense of their own wants (as some wickedly do deride such) ; but to use this lawful help till they are able to do better without it than with it, and then to lay it by, and not before. The Holy Ghost is said, (Rom. viii. 16.) to help our infirmities in prayer ; but how ? 1. By teaching us what to pray for ; not always what matter or words to enlarge ourselves by ; but what necessary graces to pray for. 2. By giving us sighs and groans inexpressible, which is far from giving copious expressions ; for groans and sighs be not words, and if they be groans that we cannot express, it would rather

seem to intimate a want of expression, than a constant abounding therein, where the Spirit doth assist; though indeed the meaning is, that the groans are so deep, that they are past the expression of our words: all our speech cannot express that deep sense that is in our hearts. For the understanding hath the advantage of the affections herein; all the thoughts of the mind may be expressed to others, but the feelings and fervent passions of the soul can be but very defectively expressed.

Lastly, All have not the spirit of prayer in like measure; nor all that have it in a great measure at one time, can find it so at pleasure. Desires rise and fall, and these earnest groans be not in every prayer where the Holy Ghost doth assist. I believe there is never a prayer that ever a believer did put up to God for things lawful and useful, but it was put up by the help of the Spirit. For the weakest prayer hath some degree of good desire in it, and addresses to God with an endeavour to express them; and these can come from none but only from the Spirit. Mere words without desires, are no more prayer, than a suit of apparel hanged on a stake, is a man. You may have the spirit of prayer, and yet have it in a very weak degree.

Yet still I would encourage you to bewail your defect herein as your sin, and seek earnestly the supply of your wants; but what is that to the questioning or denying your sincerity, or right to salvation?

Doubt 10. 'I have no gifts to make me useful to myself or others. When I should profit by the word I cannot remember it: when I should reprove a sinner, or instruct the ignorant, I have not words: if I were called to give an account of my faith, I have not words to express that which is in my mind: and what grace can here be then?'

Ans. This needs no long answer. Lament and amend those sins by which you have been disabled. But know, that these gifts depend more on nature, art, industry and common grace, than upon special saving grace. Many a bad man is excellent in all these, and many a one that is truly godly is defective. Where hath God laid our salvation upon the strength of our memories, the readiness of our tongues, or measure of the like gifts? That were almost as if he should have made a law, that all shall be saved that have sound complexions, and healthful and youthful bodies;

and all be damned that are sickly, aged, weak, children, and most women.

Doubt 11. 'O but I have been a grievous sinner, before I came home, and have fallen foully since, and I am utterly unworthy of mercy! Will the Lord ever save such an unworthy wretch as I? Will he ever give his mercy and the blood of his Son, to one that hath so abused it?'

Ans. 1. The question is not, with God, what you have been, but what you are? God takes men as they then are, and not as they were. 2. It is a dangerous thing to object the greatness of your guilt against God's mercy and Christ's merits. Do you think Christ's satisfaction is not sufficient? Or that he died for small sins and not for great? Do you not know that he hath made satisfaction for all, and will pardon all, and hath given out the pardon of all in his covenant, and that to all men, on condition they will accept Christ to pardon, and heal them in his own way? Hath God made it his great design in the work of man's redemption, to make his love and mercy as honourable and wonderful, as he did his power in the work of creation? And will you after all this, oppose the greatness of your sins against the greatness of this mercy and satisfaction? Why, you may as well think yourself to be such a one, that God could not or did not make you, as to think your sins so great, that Christ could not or did not satisfy for them, or will not pardon them, if you repent and believe in him. 3. And for worthiness, I pray you observe; there is a two-fold worthiness and righteousness. There is a legal worthiness and righteousness, which consisteth in a perfect obedience, which is the performance of the conditions of the law of pure nature and works. This no man hath but Christ; and if you look after this righteousness or worthiness in yourself, then do you depart from Christ, and make him to have died and satisfied in vain: you are a Jew and not a Christian, and are one of those that Paul so much disputeth against, that would be justified by the law. Nay, you must not so much as once imagine that all your own works can be any part of this legal righteousness or worthiness to you. Only Christ's satisfaction and merit is instead of this our legal righteousness and worthiness. God never gave Christ and mercy to any but the unworthy in this sense. If you know not yourself to be unworthy and unrighteous in the

sense of the law of works, you cannot know what Christ's righteousness is. Did Christ come to save any but sinners, and such as were lost? What need you a Saviour, if you were not condemned? And how come you to be condemned, if you were not unrighteous and unworthy? But then, 2. There is an evangelical personal worthiness and righteousness, which is the condition on which God bestows Christ's righteousness upon us; and this all have that will be saved by Christ. But what is that? Why, it hath two parts: 1. The condition and worthiness required to your union with Christ, and pardon of all your sins past, and your adoption and justification; it is no more but your hearty and thankful acceptance of the gift that is freely given you of God by his covenant grant; that is, Christ and life in him; 1 John v. 10—12. There is no worthiness required in you before faith, as a condition on which God will give you faith; but only certain means you are appointed to use for the obtaining it: and faith itself is but the acceptance of a free gift. God requireth you not to bring any other worthiness or price in your hands, but that you consent unfeignedly to have Christ as he is offered, and to the ends and uses that he is offered; that is, as one that hath satisfied for you by his blood and merits, to put away your sins, and as one that must illuminate and teach you, sanctify, and guide, and govern you by his word and Spirit; and as King and Judge will fully and finally justify you at the day of judgment, and give you the crown of glory. Christ on his part, 1. Hath merited your pardon by his satisfaction, and not properly by his sanctifying you. 2. And sanctifieth you by his Spirit, and ruleth you by his laws, and not directly by his bloodshed. 3. And he will justify you at judgment as King and Judge, and not as Satisfier or Sanctifier. But the condition on your part, of obtaining interest in Christ and his benefits, is that one faith which accepteth him in all these respects (both as King, Priest and Teacher) and to all these ends conjunctly. But then, 2. The condition and worthiness required to the continuation and consummation of your pardon, justification, and right to glory, is both the continuance of your faith, and your sincere obedience, even your keeping the baptismal covenant that you made with Christ by your parents, and the covenant which you in your own person made with him in your first true believing. These indeed

are called Worthiness and Righteousness frequently in the Gospel. But it is no worthiness consisting in any such works, which make the reward to be of debt, and not of grace (of which Paul speaks) but only in faith, and such Gospel-works as James speaks of, which make the reward to be wholly of grace and not debt.

Now if you say you are unworthy in this evangelical sense, then you must mean (if you know what you say,) that you are an infidel or unbeliever, or an impenitent, obstinate rebel, that would not have Christ to reign over him; for the Gospel calleth none unworthy, (as non-performers of its conditions,) but only these. But I hope you dare not charge yourself with such infidelity and wilful rebellion.

Doubt 12. 'Though God hath kept me from gross sins, yet I find such a searedness of conscience, and so little averseness from sin in my mind, that I fear I should commit it if I lay under temptations; and also that I should not hold out in trial if I were called to suffer death, or any grievous calamity. And that obedience which endureth merely for want of a temptation, is no true obedience.'

Answ. 1. I have fully answered this before. If you can overcome the temptations of prosperity, you have no cause to doubt distrustfully, whether you shall overcome the temptation of adversity. And if God give you grace to avoid temptations to sin, and flee occasions as much as you can, and to overcome them where you cannot avoid them; you have little reason to distrust his preservation of you, and your steadfastness thereby, if you should be cast upon greater temptations. Indeed if you feel not such a belief of the evil and danger of sinning, as to possess you with some sensible hatred of it, you have need to look to your heart for the strengthening of that belief and hatred; and fear your heart with a godly, preserving jealousy, but not with tormenting, disquieting doubts. Whatever your passionate hatred be, if you have a settled, well-grounded resolution, to walk in obedience to the death, you may confidently and comfortably trust him for your preservation, who gave you those resolutions.

2. And the last sentence of this doubt had need of great caution, before you conclude it a certain truth. It is true that the obedience, which by an ordinary temptation, such as men may expect, would be overthrown, is not well ground-

ed and rooted before it is overthrown. But it is a great doubt whether there be not degrees of temptation possible, which would overcome the resolution and grace of the most holy, having such assistance as the Spirit usually giveth believers in temptation? and whether some temptations which overcome not a strong Christian, would not overcome a weak one, who yet hath true grace? I conclude nothing of these doubts. But I would not have you trouble yourself upon confident conclusions, on so doubtful grounds. This I am certain of, 1. That the strongest Christian should take heed of temptation, and not trust to the strength of his graces, nor presume on God's preservation, while he wilfully casteth himself in the mouth of dangers; nor to be encouraged hereunto upon any persuasion of an impossibility of his falling away. O the falls, the fearful falls that I have known (alas, how often!) the most eminent men for godliness that ever I knew, to be guilty of, by casting themselves upon temptations. I confess I will never be confident of that man's perseverance, were he the best that I know on earth, who casteth himself upon violent temptations, especially the temptations of sensuality, prosperity, and seducement. 2. I know God hath taught us daily to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation, and to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (I never understood the necessity of that petition feelingly, till I saw the examples of these seven or eight years last past.) This being so, you must look that your perseverance should be by being preserved from temptation; and must rather examine, whether you have that grace which will enable you to avoid temptations, than whether you have grace enough to overcome them, if you rush into them. But if God unavoidably cast you upon them, keep up your watch and prayer, and you have no cause to trouble yourself with distrustful fears.

Doubt 13. 'I am afraid, lest I have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, and then there is no hope of my salvation.'

Ans. It seems you know not what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. It is this, When a man is convinced that Christ and his disciples did really work those glorious miracles which are recorded in the Gospel, and yet will not believe that Christ is the Son of God, and his doctrine true,

though sealed with all those miracles, and other holy and wonderful works of the Spirit, but do blasphemously maintain that they were done by the power of the devil. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost. And dare you say that you are guilty of this? If you be, then you do not believe that Christ is the Son of God, and the Messiah, and his Gospel true. And then you will sure oppose him, and maintain that he was a deceiver, and that the devil was the author of all the miraculous and gracious workings of his Spirit. Then you will never fear his displeasure, nor call him seriously either Lord or Saviour! nor tender him any service, any more than you do to Mahomet. None but infidels do commit the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; nor but few of them. Unbelief is eminently called "sin" in the Gospel; and that "unbelief" which is maintained by blaspheming the glorious works of the Holy Ghost, which Christ and his disciples through many years time did perform for a testimony to his truth, that is called singularly, "The sin against the Holy Ghost!" You may meet with other descriptions of this sin, which may occasion your terror; but I am fully persuaded that this is the plain truth.

Doubt 14. 'But I greatly fear lest the time of grace be past, and lest I have out-sat the day of mercy, and now mercy hath wholly forsaken me. For I have oft heard ministers tell me from the word, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of your visitation; to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, lest God swear in his wrath, that they shall not enter into his rest." But I have stood out long after, I have resisted and quenched the Spirit, and now it is I fear departed from me.'

Answ. Here is sufficient matter for humiliation, but the doubting ariseth merely from ignorance. The day of grace may in two respects be said to be over: The first (and most properly so called) is, When God will not accept of a sinner, though he should repent and return. This is never in this life for certain. And he that imagineth any such thing as that it is too late, while his soul is in his body, to repent and accept of Christ and mercy, is merely ignorant of the tenor and sense of the Gospel! For the new law of grace doth limit no time on earth for God's accepting of a returning sinner. True faith and repentance do as surely save at the last hour of the day, as at the first. God hath said,

that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. He hath no where excepted late believers or repenters. Shew any such exception if you can.

2. The second sense in which it may be said that the day of grace is over, is this: When a man hath so long resisted the Spirit, that God hath given him over to the wilful, obstinate refusals of mercy, and of Christ's government, resolving that he will never give him the prevailing grace of his Spirit. Where note, 1. That this same man might still have grace as soon as any other, if he were but willing to accept Christ, and grace in him. 2. That no man can know of himself or any other, that God hath thus finally forsaken him; for God hath given us no sign to know it by (at least who sin not against the Holy Ghost). God hath not told us his secret intents concerning such. 3. Yet some men have far greater cause to fear it than others; especially those men, who under the most searching, lively sermons, do continue secure and wilful in known wickedness; either hating godliness and godly persons, and all that do reprove them, or at least being stupified, that they feel no more than a post, the force of God's terrors, or the sweetness of his promises; but make a jest of sinning, and think the life of godliness a needless thing. Especially if they grow old in this course, I confess such have great cause to fear, lest they are quite forsaken of God; for very few such are ever recovered. 4. And therefore it may well be said to all men, "To day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts," &c. And "This is the acceptable time; this is the day of salvation;" both as this life is called, "The day of salvation;" and because no man is certain to live another day, that he may repent; nor yet to have grace to repent if he live. 5. But what is all this to you that do repent? Can you have cause to fear that your day of grace is over, that have received grace? Why, that is as foolish a thing, as if a man should come to the market and buy corn, and when he hath done, go home lamenting that the market was past before he came. Or as a man should come and hear a sermon, and when he hath done, lament that the sermon was done before he came. If your day of grace be past, tell me (and do not wrong God), Where had you the grace of repentance? How came you by that grace of holy desires? Who made you willing to have Christ for your Lord and Saviour? So that you had

rather have him, and God's favour, and a holy heart and life, than all the glory of the world? How came you to desire that you were such a one as God would have you to be? And to desire that all your sins were dead, and might never live in you more? And that you were able to love God, and delight in him, and please him even in perfection? And that you are so troubled that you cannot do it? Are these signs that your day of grace is over? Doth God's Spirit breathe out groans after Christ and grace within you? And yet is the day of grace over? Nay, what if you had no grace? Do you not hear God daily offering you Christ and grace? Doth he not entreat and beseech you to be reconciled unto him? (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) And would he not compel you to come in? (Matt. xxii.) Do you not feel some uneasiness in your sinful condition? And some motions and strivings at your heart to get out of it? Certainly (though you should be one that hath yet no grace to salvation), yet these continued offers of grace, and strivings of the Spirit of Christ with your heart, do shew that God hath not quite forsaken you, and that your day of grace and visitation is not past.

Doubt 15. 'But I have sinned since my profession, and that even against my knowledge and conscience. I have had temptations to sin, and I have considered of the evil and danger, and yet in the most sober deliberations, I have resolved to sin. And how can such a one have any true grace, or be saved?'

Ans. 1. If you had not true grace, God is still offering it, and ready to work it.

2. Where do you find in Scripture, that none who have true grace do sin knowingly or deliberately. Perhaps you will say in Heb. x. 24. "If we sin wilfully, after the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fire, which shall devour the adversaries." *Ans.* But you must know, that it is not every wilful sin which is there mentioned; but, as even now I told you, unbelief is peculiarly called sin in the New Testament. And the true meaning of the text is, If we utterly renounce Christ by infidelity, as not being the true Messiah, after we have known his truth, then, &c. Indeed none sin more against knowledge than the godly when they

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do sin ; for they know more, for the most part, than others do. And passion and sensuality (the remnant of it which yet remaineth) will be working strongly in your very deliberations against sin, and either perverting the judgment to doubt whether it be a sin, or whether there be any such danger in it ; or whether it be not a very little sin ; or else blinding it, that it cannot see the arguments against the sin in their full vigour. Or at least, prepossessing the heart and delight, and so hindering our reasons against sin from going down to the heart, and working on the will, and so from commanding the actions of the body. This may befall a godly man. And moreover, God may withdraw his grace as he did from Peter and David in their sin. And then our considerations will work but faintly, and sensuality and sinful passion will work effectually. It is scarce possible, I think, that such a man as David could be so long about so horrid a sin, and after contrive the murder of Uriah, and all this without deliberation, or any reasonings in himself to the contrary.

3. The truth is, though this be no good cause for any repenting sinner to doubt of salvation, yet it is a very grievous aggravation of sin, to commit it against knowledge and conscience, and upon consideration. And therefore I advise all that love their peace or salvation, to take heed of it. For as they will find that no sin doth more deeply wound the conscience, and plunge the sinner into fearful perplexities ; which oftentimes hangs on him very long, so the oftener such sin is committed, the less evidence will such a one have of the sincerity of their faith and obedience ; and therefore, in the name of God, beware. And let the troubled soul make this the matter of his moderate humiliation, and spare not. Bewail it before God. Take shame to yourself, and freely confess it, when you are called to it before men. Favour it not, and deal not gently with it, if you would have peace ; but give glory to God, by taking the just dishonour to yourselves. Tender dealing is an ill sign, and hath sad effects. But yet for every sin against knowledge, to doubt of the truth of grace, is not right, much less to doubt of the pardon of that sin when we truly repent of it. Are you unfeignedly sorry for your sins against conscience, and resolve against them for the future, through the help of God's

grace? If so, then that sin is pardoned now, through the blood of Christ believed in, whether you had then grace or not.

Doubt 16. 'But I have such corruptions in my nature, that I cannot overcome. I have such a passionate nature, and such a vanity of mind, and such worldly desires, that though I pray and strive against them daily, yet do they prevail. And it is not striving without overcoming that will prove the truth of grace in any. Besides, I do not grow in grace as all God's people do.'

Answ. 1. Do you think sin is not overcome as long as it dwelleth in us, and daily troubleth us, and is working in us? Paul saith, "The evil that I would not do, that I do;" and, "We cannot do the things that we would." And yet Paul was not overcome with these sins, nor had they dominion over him. You must consider of these sins as in the habit, or in the act. In the habit as they are in the passions they will be still strong; but as they are in the will they are weak and overcome. Had you not rather you were void of these passions than not, and that you might restrain them in the act? Are you not weary of them, and daily pray and strive against them? If so, it seems they have not your will. 2. And for the actual passion (as I may call it) itself, you must distinguish between, 1. Those which the will hath full power of, and which it hath but partial power over. 2. And between the several degrees of the passion. 3. And between the inward passion and the outward expressions.

Some degree of anger and of lust will oft stir in the heart, whether we will or not. But I hope you restrain it in the degree; and much more from breaking out into practices of lust, or cursed speeches, or railings, backbitings, slanderings, or revenge. For these your will, if sanctified, hath power to command. Even the acts of our corruptions, as well as the habits, will stick by us in this life; but if it be in gross sins, or avoidable infirmities carelessly or wilfully continued, I can tell you a better way to assurance and comfort than your complaints are. Instead of being afraid lest you cannot have your sin and Christ together, do but more heartily oppose that sin, and deal roundly and conscientiously against it, till you have overcome it, and then you may ease yourself of your complaints and troubles. If you say, 'O but it is not so easily done. I cannot overcome it.

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I have prayed and strove against it long.' I answer, But are you heartily willing to be rid of it? If you will, it will be no impossible matter to be rid of the outward expressions, and the high degree of the passion, though not of every degree. Try this course awhile, and then judge. 1. Plainly confess your guiltiness. 2. Never more excuse it, or plead for it, to any that blameth you. 3. Desire those that live and deal with you, to tell you roundly of it as soon as they discern it, and engage yourself to them to take it well, as a friendly action which yourself requested of them. 4. When you feel the passion begin to stir, enter into serious consideration of the sinfulness, or go and tell some friend of your frail inclination, and presently beg their help against it. If it be godly persons that you are angry with, instead of giving them ill words, presently as soon as you feel the fire kindle, say to them, 'I have a very passionate nature, which already is kindled, I pray you reprehend me for it, and help me against it, and pray to God for my deliverance.' Also go to God yourself, and complain to him of it, and beg his help. Lastly, be sure that you make not light of it, and see that you avoid the occasions as much as you can. If you are indeed willing to be rid of the sin, then do not call these directions too hard. But shew your willingness in ready practising them. And thus you may see that it is better to make your corruptions the matter of your humiliation and reformation, than of your torment.

And for the other part of the doubt that you grow not in grace, I answer: 1. The promises of growth are conditional, or else signify what God will usually do for his people: but it is certain that they be not absolute to all believers. For it is certain that all true Christians do not always grow; nay, that many do too oft decline, and lose their first fervour of love, and fall into sin, and live more carelessly. Yea, it is certain that a true believer may die in such decays, or in a far lower state than formerly he hath been in. If I thought this needed proof, I could easily prove it; but he that openeth his eyes may soon see enough proof in England. 2. Many Christians do much mistake themselves about the very nature of true grace; and then no wonder if they think that they thrive when they do not, and that they thrive not when they do. They think that more of the life and truth of grace doth lie in passionate

feelings of sin, grace, duty, &c. In sensible zeal, grief, joy, &c. And do not know that the chief part lieth in the understanding's estimation, and the will's firm choice and resolution. And then they think they decline in grace, because they cannot weep, or joy so sensibly as before. Let me assure you of this as truth : 1. Young people have usually more vigour of affections than old ; because they have more vigour of body, and hot blood, and agile, active spirits ; when the freezing, decayed bodies and spirits of old men must needs make an abatement of their fervour in all duties. 2. The like may be said of most that are weak and sickly in comparison of the strong and healthful. 3. All things affect men most deeply when they are new, and time wear-eth off the vigour of that affection. The first hearing of such a fight, or such a victory, or such a great man, or friend dead, doth much affect us ; but so it doth not still. When you first receive any benefit, it more delighteth you than long after. So married people, or any other in the first change of their condition, are more affected with it than afterward. And indeed man's nature cannot hold up in a constant elevation of affections. Children are more taken with every thing that they see and hear than old men, because all is new to them, and all seems old to the other. 4. I have told you before that some natures are more fiery, passionate, and fervent than others are ; and in such a little grace will cause a great deal of earnestness, zeal and passion. But let me tell you, that you may grow in these, and not grow in the body of your graces. Doubtless satan himself may do so much to kindle your zeal, if he do but see it void of sound knowledge, as he did in James and John when they would have called for fire from heaven, but they knew not what spirit they were of. For the doleful case of Christ's churches in this age hath put quite beyond dispute that none do the devil's works more effectually, nor oppose the kingdom of Christ more desperately, than they that have the hottest zeal with the weakest judgments. And as fire is most excellent and necessary in the chimney, but in the thatch it is worse than the vilest dung ; so is zeal most excellent when guided by sound judgment ; but more destructive than profane sensuality when it is let loose and misguided.

On the other side, you may decay much in feeling and fer-

your of affections, and yet grow in grace, if you do but grow in the understanding and the will. And indeed this is the common growth which Christians have in their age. Examine therefore whether you have this or no. Do you not understand the things of the Spirit better than you formerly did? Do you not value God, Christ, glory, and grace at higher rates than formerly? Are you not more fully resolved to stick to Christ to the death than formerly you have been? I do not think but it would be a harder work for satan to draw you from Christ to the flesh than heretofore. When the tree hath done growing in visible greatness, it groweth in rootedness. The fruit grows first in bulk and quantity, and then in mellow sweetness. Are not you less censorious, and more peaceable than heretofore? I tell you that is a more noble growth than a great deal of austere and bitter, youthful, censorious, dividing zeal of many will prove. Mark most aged, experienced Christians, that walk uprightly, and you will find that they quite outstrip the younger. 1. In experience, knowledge, prudence, and soundness of judgment. 2. In well-settled resolutions for Christ, his truth, and cause. 3. In a love of peace, especially in the church, and a hatred of dissensions, perverse contendings and divisions. If you can shew this growth, say not that you do not grow.

3. But suppose you do not grow, should you therefore deny the sincerity of your grace? I would not persuade any soul that they grow, when they do not. But if you do not, be humbled for it, and endeavour it for the future. Make it your desire and daily business, and spare not still. Lie not complaining, but rouse up your soul, and see what is amiss, and set upon neglected duties, and remove those corruptions that hinder your growth. Converse with growing Christians, and under quickening means; endeavour the good of other men's souls as well as your own; and then you will find that growth, which will silence this doubt, and do much more for you than that.

Doubt 17. 'I am troubled with such blasphemous thoughts and temptations to unbelief, even against God, and Christ, and Scripture, and the life to come, that I doubt I have no faith.'

Answ. To be tempted is no sign of gracelessness, but to yield to the temptation; not every yielding neither, but to

be overcome of the temptation. Most melancholy people, especially that have any knowledge in religion, are frequently haunted with blasphemous temptations. I have oft wondered that the devil should have such a power and advantage in the predominancy of that distemper. Scarce one person of ten, whoever was with me in deep melancholy, either for the cure of body or mind, but hath been haunted with these blasphemous thoughts; and that so impetuously and violently set on and followed, that it might appear to be from the devil; yea, even many that never seemed godly, or to mind any such thing before. I confess it hath been a strengthening to my own faith, to see the devil such an enemy to the Christian faith; yea, to the Godhead itself.

But perhaps you will say, 'It is not mere temptation from satan that I complain of; but it takes too much with my sinful heart. I am ready to doubt oftentimes whether there be a God, or whether his providence determine of the things here below; or whether Scripture be true, or the soul immortal,' &c.

Answ. This is a very great sin, and you ought to bewail and abhor it, and, in the name of God, make not light of it, but look to it betime. But yet let me tell you, that some degree of this blasphemy and infidelity may remain with the truest saving faith. The best may say, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." But I will tell you my judgment, When your unbelief is such as to be a sign of a graceless soul in the state of damnation: if your doubtings of the truth of Scripture and the life to come, be so great that you will not let go the pleasures and profits of sin, and part with all, if God call you to it, in hope of that glory promised, and to escape the judgment threatened, because you look upon the things of the life to come but as uncertain things; then is your belief no saving belief; but your unbelief is prevalent. But if for all your staggerings, you see so much probability of the truth of Scripture and the life to come, that you are resolved to venture (and part with, if called to it) all worldly hopes and happiness for the hope of that promised glory, and to make it the chiefest business of your life to attain it, and do deny yourself the pleasures of sin for that end; this is a true saving faith, as is evident by its victory; notwithstanding all the infidelity, Atheism, and blasphemy that is mixed with it.

But again, let me advise you to take heed of this heinous sin, and bewail and detest the very least degree of it. It is dangerous when the devil strikes at the very root, and heart, and foundation of all your religion. There is more sinfulness and danger in this than in many other sins. And therefore let it never be motioned to your soul without abhorrence. Two ways the devil hath to move it. The one is by his immediate inward suggestions; these are bad enough. The other is by his accursed instruments; and this is a far more dangerous way; whether it be by books, or by the words of men. And yet if it be by notorious, wicked men, or fools, the temptation is the less; but when it is by men of cunning wit, and smooth tongues, and hypocritical lives (for far be that wickedness from me, as to call them godly, or wise, or honest), then it is the greatest snare that the devil hath to lay. O just and dreadful God! Did I think one day that those that I was then praying with, and rejoicing with, and that went up with me to the house of God in familiarity, would this day be blasphemers of thy sacred name, and deny the Lord that bought them, and deride thy holy word as a fable, and give up themselves to the present pleasures of sin, because they believe not thy promised glory? O righteous and merciful God, that hast preserved the humble from this condemnation, and hast permitted only the proud and sensual professors to fall into it, and hast given them over to hellish conversations according to the nature of their hellish opinions, that they might be rather a terror to others than a snare? I call their doctrine and practice hellish, from its original, because it comes from the father of lies, but not that there is any such opinion or practice in hell. He that tempts others to deny the godhead, the Christian faith, the Scripture, the life to come, doth no whit doubt of any one of them himself, but believes and trembles. O fearful blindness of the professors of religion, that will hear, if not receive these blasphemies from the mouth of an apostate professor, which they would abhor if it came immediately from the devil himself. With what sad complaints and trembling do poor sinners cry out (and not without cause), ‘O I am haunted with such blasphemous temptations, that I am afraid lest God should suddenly destroy me, that ever such thoughts should come into my heart.’ But if an instrument of the devil come and plead

against the Scripture or the life to come, or Christ himself, they will hear him with less detestation. The devil knows that familiarity will cause us to take that from a man, which we would abhor from the devil himself immediately. I intend not to give you now a particular preservation against each of these temptations. Only let me tell you, that this is the direct way to infidelity, apostacy, and the sin against the Holy Ghost; and if by any seducers the devil do overcome you herein, you are lost for ever, and there will be no more sacrifice for your sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and that fire which shall devour the adversaries of Christ.

Doubt 18. 'I have so great fear of death, and unwillingness to be with God, that I am afraid I have no grace: for if I had Paul's spirit, I should be able to say with him, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ," whereas now, no news would be to me more unwelcome.'

Answ. There is a loathness to die that comes from a desire to do God more service; and another that comes from an apprehension of unreadiness, when we would fain have more assurance of salvation first; or would be fitter to meet our Lord. Blame not a man to be somewhat backward, that knows it must go with him for ever in heaven or hell, according as he is found at death. But these two be not so much a loathness to die, as a loathness to die now at this time. 3. There is also in all men living, good and bad, a natural abhorrence and fear of death. God hath put this into men's nature (even in innocency) to be his great means of governing the world. No man would live in order, or be kept in obedience, but for this. He that cares not for his own life, is master of another's. Grace doth not root out this abhorrence of death, no more than it unmanneth us; only it restrains it from excess, and so far overcometh the violence of the passion, by the apprehensions of a better life beyond death, that a believer may the more quietly and willingly submit to it. Paul himself desireth not death, but the life which followeth it. "He desireth to depart and be with Christ;" that is, he had rather be in heaven than on earth, and therefore he is contented to submit to the penal sharp passage. God doth not command you to desire death itself, nor forbid you fearing it as an evil to nature, and

a punishment of sin. Only he requireth you to desire the blessedness to be enjoyed after death, and that so earnestly as may make death itself the easier to you. Thank God, if the fear of death be somewhat abated in you, though it be not sweetened. Men may pretend what they please, but nature will abhor death as long as it is nature, and as long as man is man; else temporal death had been no punishment to Adam, if his innocent nature had not abhorred it as it was an evil to it. Tell me but this, If death did not stand in your way to heaven, but that you could travel to heaven, as easily as to London, would not you rather go thither and be with Christ, than stay in sin and vanity here on earth, so be it you were certain to be with Christ? If you can say yea to this, then it is apparent that your loathness to die is either from the uncertainty of your salvation, or from the natural averseness to a dissolution, or both; and not from an unwillingness to be with Christ, or a preferring the vanities of this world before the blessedness of that to come. Lastly, It may be God may lay that affliction on you, or use some other necessary means with you yet, before you die, that may make you more willing than now you are.

Doubt 19. 'God layeth upon me such heavy afflictions, that I cannot believe he loves me. He writeth bitter things against me, and taketh me for his enemy. I am afflicted in my health, in my name, in my children, and nearest friends, and in my estate. I live in continual poverty, or pinching distress of one kind or other; yea, my very soul is filled with his terrors, and night and day is his hand heavy upon me.'

Answ. I have said enough to this before, nor do I think it needful to say any more, when the Holy Ghost hath said so much; but only to desire you to read what he hath written in Heb. xii. and Job throughout; and Psal. xxxvii. lxxiii. and divers others. The next doubt is contrary.

Doubt 20. 'I read in Scripture, that through many tribulations we must enter into heaven, and that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; and that he that taketh not up his cross, and so followeth Christ, cannot be his disciple. And that if we are not corrected, we are bastards, and not sons. But I never had any affliction from God, but have lived in constant prosperity to this day. Christ saith, "Woe to you when all men speak well

of you." But all men, for aught I know, speak well of me; and therefore I doubt of my sincerity.'

Ans. I would not have mentioned this doubt, but that I was so foolish as to be troubled with it myself; and perhaps some others may be as foolish as I; though I think but few in these times. Our great friends have done so much to resolve them more effectually than words could have done. 1. Some of those texts speak only of man's duty of bearing persecution and tribulation, when God lays it on us, rather than of the event, that it shall certainly come. 2. Yet I think it ordinarily certain, and to be expected as to the event. Doubtless tribulation is God's common road to heaven. Every ignorant person is so well aware of this, that they delude themselves in their sufferings, saying, that God hath given them their punishment in this life, and therefore they hope he will not punish them in another. If any soul be so silly as to fear and doubt for want of affliction; if none else will do the cure, let them follow my counsel, and I dare warrant them for this, and I will advise them to nothing but what is honest, yea, and necessary, and what I have tried effectually upon myself; and I can assure you it cured me, and I can give it a 'Probatum est.' And first, see that you be faithful in your duty to all sinners within your reach; be they great or small, gentlemen or beggars, do your duty in reproving them meekly and lovingly, yet plainly and seriously, telling them of the danger of God's everlasting wrath; and when you find them obstinate, tell the church-officers of them, that they may do their duty; and if yet they are unreformed, they may be excluded from the church's communion, and all Christian familiarity. Try this course awhile, and if you meet with no afflictions, and get no more fists about your ears than your own, nor more tongues against you than formerly, tell me I am mistaken. Men basely baulk and shun almost all the displeasing, ungrateful work of Christianity of purpose, lest they should have sufferings in the flesh, and then they doubt of their sincerity for want of sufferings. My second advice is, Do but stay awhile in patience (but prepare your patience for a sharper encounter), and do not tie God to your time. He hath not told you when your afflictions shall come. If he deal easier with you than with others, and give you longer time to prepare for them, be not you

offended at that, and do not quarrel with your mercies. It is about seventeen years since I was troubled with this doubt, thinking I was no son, because I was not afflicted; and I think I have had few days without pain for this sixteen years since together, nor but few hours, if any one, for this six or seven years. And thus my scruple is removed.

And if yet any be troubled with this doubt, if the church's and common trouble be any trouble to them, shall I be bold to tell them my thoughts? (only understand that I pretend not to prophesy, but to conjecture at effects by the position of their moral causes.) I think that the righteous King of saints is even now, for our over-admiring rash zeal, and sharp, high profession, making for England so heavy an affliction, and a sharp scourge, to be inflicted by seduced, proud, self-conceited professors, as neither we nor our fathers did ever yet bear. Except it should prove the merciful intent of our Father, only to suffer them to ripen for their own destruction, to be a standing monument for the effectual warning of all after-ages of the church, whither pride and heady zeal may bring professors of holiness. And when they are full ripe, to do by them as at Munster, and in New England, that they may go no further, but their folly may be known to all: Amen. I have told you of my thoughts of this long ago, in my Book of Baptism.

All these doubts I have here answered, that you may see how necessary it is, that in all your troubles you be sure to distinguish between matter of doubting and matter of humiliation. Alas, what soul is so holy on the earth, but must daily say, "Forgive us our trespasses?" and cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But at the same time we may thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. If every sin should make us doubt, we should do nothing but doubt. I know you may easily tell a long and a sad story of your sins; how you are troubled with this and that, and many a distemper, and weak and wanting in every grace and duty, and have committed many sins. But doth it follow that therefore you have no true grace? Learn therefore to be humbled for every sin, but not to doubt of your sincerity and salvation for every sin.

Direct. XXX. 'Whatsoever new doubtings do arise in

your soul, see that you carefully discern whether they are such as must be resolved from the consideration of general grace, or of special grace. And especially be sure of this, that when you want or lose your certainty of sincerity and salvation, you have presently recourse to the probability of it, and lose not the comforts of that. Or if you should lose the sight of a probability of special grace, yet see that you have recourse at the utmost to general grace, and never let go the comforts of that at the worst.'

This rule is of unspeakable necessity and use for your peace and comfort. Here are three several degrees of the grounds of comfort. It is exceeding weakness for a man that is beaten from one of these holds, therefore to let go the other two. And because he cannot have the highest degree, therefore to conclude that he hath none at all.

I beseech you in all your doubtings and complainings, still remember the two rules here laid down. 1. All doubts arise not from the same cause, and therefore must not have the same cure. Let the first thing which you do upon every doubt, be this: To consider, whether it come from the unbelieving or low apprehensions of the general grounds of comfort, or from the want of evidence of special grace. For that which is a fit remedy for one of these, will do little for the cure of the other. 2. If your doubting be only, Whether you be sincere in believing, loving, hoping, repenting, and obeying, then it will not answer this doubt, though you discern never so much of God's merciful nature, or Christ's gracious office, or the universal sufficiency of his death and satisfaction, or the freeness and extent of the promise of pardon. For I profess considerably, that I do not know in all the body of popery concerning merits, justification, human satisfactions, assurance, or any other point about grace, for which we unchurch them, that they err half so dangerously as Saltmarsh, and such Antinomians, do in this point, when they say, That Christ hath repented and believed for us; meaning it of that faith and repentance which he hath made the conditions of our salvation. And that we must no more question our own faith, than we must question Christ the object of it. It will be no saving plea at the day of judgment to say, Though I repented not, and believed not, yet Christ died for me, or God is merciful, or Christ repented and believed for me, or God made me a free promise and

gift of salvation, if I would repent and believe. What comfort would such an answer give them? And therefore doubtless it will not serve now to quiet any knowing Christian against those doubts that arise from the want of particular evidence of special grace, though in their own place, the general grounds of comfort are of absolute necessity thereto.

2. On the other side, If your doubts arise from any defect in your apprehensions of general grace, it is not your looking after marks in yourself that is the way to resolve them. I told you in the beginning, that the general grounds of comfort lie in four particulars (that square foundation which will bear up all the faith of the saints). First, God's merciful and inconceivable good and gracious nature, and his love to mankind. Secondly, The gracious nature of the Mediator God and Man, with his most gracious, undertaking office of saving and reconciling. Thirdly, The sufficiency of Christ's death and satisfaction for all the world, to save them if they will accept him and his grace. I put it in terms beyond dispute, because I would not build up believer's comforts on points which godly divines do contradict (as little as may be.) Yet I am past all doubt myself, that Christ did actually make satisfaction to God's justice for ALL, and that no man perisheth for want of an expiatory sacrifice, but for want of faith to believe and apply it, or for want of repentance and yielding to recovering grace. The fourth is, The universal grant of pardon, and right to salvation, on condition of faith and repentance. If your doubt arise from the ignorance or overlooking of any of these, to these must you have recourse for your cure.

Where note, That all those doubts which come from the greatness of your sin, as such, that you think will not therefore be forgiven, or that come from the sense of unworthiness (in a legal sense), or want of merit in yourself, and all your doubts, whether God be willing to accept and forgive you, though you should repent and believe: or, whether any sacrifice was offered by Christ for your sins; I say, all these come from your ignorance or unbelief of some or all of the four general grounds here mentioned; and from them must be cured.

Note also in a special manner, That there is a great difference between these four general grounds, and your parti-

cular evidences in point of certainty. For these four corner-stones are fast founded beyond all possibility of removal, so that they are always of as undoubted certainty as that the heaven is over your head; and they are immutable still the same. These you are commanded strictly to believe with a divine faith, as being the clearly revealed truths of God; and if you should not believe them, yet they remain firm and true, and your unbelief should not make void the universal promise and grace of God. But your own evidences of special grace are not so certain, so clear, or so immutable; nor are you bound to believe them, but to search after them that you may know them. You are not bound by any word of God strictly to believe that you do believe, or repent, but to try and discern it. This then is the first part of this Direction, That you always discover whether your troubles arise from low unbelieving, or ignorant thoughts of God's mercifulness, Christ's gracious nature and office, general satisfaction, or the universal promise. Or, whether they arise from want of evidence of sincerity in yourself. And accordingly in your thoughts apply the remedy.

The second part of the Direction is, that you hold fast probabilities of special grace, when you lose your certainty, and that you hold fast your general grounds, when you lose both your former. Never forget this in any of your doubts.

You say, your faith and obedience have such breaches and sad defects in them, that you cannot be certain that they are sincere. Suppose it be so: Do you see no great likelihood or hopes yet that they are sincere? If you do (as I think many Christians easily may, that yet receive not a proportionable comfort) remember that this is no small mercy, but matter of great consolation.

But suppose the worst, that you see no grace in yourself, yet you cannot be sure you have none; for it may be there, and you not see it. Yea, suppose the worst, that you were sure that you had no true grace at all, yet remember that you have still abundant cause of comfort in God's general grace. Do you think you must needs despair, or give up all hope and comfort, or conclude yourself irrecoverably lost, because you are graceless? Why, be it known to you, there is that ground of consolation in general grace, that

may make the hearts of the very wicked to leap for joy. Do I need to prove that to you? You know that the Gospel is called, "Glad tidings of salvation," and the preachers of it are to tell those to whom they preach it, "Behold, we bring you tidings of great joy, and glad tidings to all people." And you know before the Gospel comes to men they are miserable. If then it be glad tidings, and tidings of great joy to all the unconverted where it comes, why should it not be so to you? And where is your great joy? If you be graceless, is it nothing to know that God is exceeding merciful, "slow to anger, ready to forgive, pardoning iniquities, transgression, and sin," loving mankind? Is it nothing to know that the Lord hath brought infinite mercy and goodness down into human flesh? And hath taken on him the most blessed office of reconciling, and is become the Lamb of God? Is it nothing to you, that all your sins have a sufficient sacrifice paid for them, so that you are certain not to perish for want of a ransom? Is it nothing to you that God hath made such an universal grant of pardon and salvation to all that will believe? And that you are not on the terms of the mere law of works, to be judged for not obeying in perfection? Suppose you are never so certainly graceless, is it not a ground of unspeakable comfort, that you may be certain that nothing can condemn you, but a flat refusal or unwillingness to have Christ and his salvation? This is a certain truth, which may comfort a man as yet unsanctified, that sin merely as sin shall not condemn him, nor any thing in the world, but the final, obstinate refusal of the remedy, which thereby leaveth all other sin unpardoned.

Now I would ask you this question in your greatest fears that you are out of Christ: Are you willing to have Christ to pardon, sanctify, guide, and save you, or not? If you are, then you are a true believer, and did not know it. If you are not, if you will but wait on God's word in hearing, and reading, and consider frequently and seriously of the necessity and excellency of Christ and glory, and the evil of sin, and the vanity of the world, and will but beg earnestly of God to make you willing, you shall find that God hath not appointed you this means in vain, and that this way will be more profitable to you than all your complainings. See therefore when you are at the very lowest, that you forsake not the comforts of general grace.

And indeed those that deny any general grace or redemption, do leave poor Christians in a very lamentable condition. For, alas! assurance of special grace (yea, or a high probability) is not so common a thing as mere disputers against doubting have imagined. And when a poor Christian is beaten from his assurance (which few have), he hath nothing but probabilities; and when he hath no confident, probable persuasion of special grace, where is he then? And what hath he left to support his soul? I will not so far now meddle with that controversy, as to open further how this opinion tends to leave most Christians in desperation, for all the pretences it hath found. And I had done more, but that general redemption or satisfaction, is commonly taught in the maintaining of the general sufficiency of it, though men understand not how they contradict themselves.

But perhaps you will say, 'This is cold comfort; for I may as well argue thus, Christ will damn sinners; I am a sinner, therefore he will damn me; as to argue thus, Christ will save sinners; I am a sinner, therefore he will save me.' I answer, There is no shew of soundness in either of these arguments. It is not a certainty that Christ will save you, that can be gathered from general grace alone; that must be had from assurance of special grace superadded to the general. But a conditional certainty you may have from general grace only, and thus you may soundly and infallibly argue, 'God hath made a grant to every sinful man, of pardon and salvation through Christ's sacrifice, if they will but repent and believe in Christ; but I am a sinful man, therefore God hath made this grant of pardon and salvation to me.'

Direct. XXXI. 'If God do bless you with an able, faithful, prudent, judicious pastor, take him for your guide under Christ in the way to salvation; and open to him your case, and desire his advice in all your extraordinary, pressing necessities, where you have found the advice of other godly friends to be insufficient; and this not once or twice only, but as often as such pressing necessities shall return. Or if your own pastor be more defective for such a work, make use of some other minister of Christ, who is more meet.'

Here I have these several things to open to you. 1. That it is your duty to seek this Direction from the guides of the church. 2. When and in what cases you should do this.

3. To what end, and how far. 4. What ministers they be that you should choose thereto. 5. In what manner you must open your case, that you may receive satisfaction.

1. The first hath two parts, (1.) That you must open your case. (2.) And that to your pastor. 1. The devil hath great advantage while you keep his counsel; two are better than one; for if one of them fall, he hath another to help him. It is dangerous, resisting such an enemy alone. An uniting of forces oft procureth victory. God giveth others knowledge, prudence, and other gifts for our good; that so every member of the body may have need of another, and each be useful to the other. An independency of Christian upon Christian, is most unchristian; much more of people on their guides. It ceaseth to be a member, which is separated from the body; and to make no use of the body or fellow members, is next to separation from them. Sometimes bashfulness is the cause, sometimes self-confidence (a far worse cause); but whatever is the cause of Christians smothering their doubts, the effects are oft sad. The disease is oft gone so far, that the cure is very difficult, before some bashful, or proud, or tender patients will open their disease. The very opening of a man's grief to a faithful friend, doth oft ease the heart of itself. 2. And that this should be done to your pastor, I will shew you further anon.

2. But you must understand well when this is your duty. 1. Not in every small infirmity, which accompanies Christians in their daily most watchful conversation. Nor yet in every lesser doubt, which may be otherways resolved. It is a folly and a wrong to physicians to run to them for every cut finger or prick with a pin. Every neighbour can help you in this. 2. Nor except it be a weighty case indeed, go not first to a minister. But first study the case yourself, and seek God's direction: if that will not serve, open your case to your nearest bosom friend that is godly and judicious. And in these two cases always go to your pastor. 2. In case more private means can do you no good, then God calls you to seek further. If a cut finger so fester that ordinary means will not cure it, you must go to the physician. 3. If the case be weighty and dangerous; for then none but the more prudent advice is to be trusted. If you be struck with a dangerous disease, I would not have you delay so long, nor wrong yourself so much, as to stay while you tamper with

every woman's medicine, but go presently to the physician. So if you either fall into any grievous sin, or any terrible pangs of conscience, or any great straits and difficulties about matters of doctrine or practice, go presently to your pastor for advice. The devil, and pride, and bashfulness, will do their utmost to hinder you; but see that they prevail not.

3. Next consider to what end you must do this. Not, 1. Either to expect that a minister can of himself create peace in you; or that all your doubts should vanish as soon as ever you have opened your mind. Only the great Peacemaker, the Prince of peace, can create peace in you: ascribe not to any the office of the Holy Ghost, to be your effectual comforter. To expect more from man than belongs to man, is the way to receive nothing from him, but to cause God to blast to you the best endeavours. 2. Nor must you resolve to take all merely from the word of your pastor, as if he were infallible: nor absolutely to judge of yourself as he judgeth. For he may be too rigorous, or more commonly too charitable in his opinion of you: there may be much of your disposition and conversation unknown to him, which may hinder his right judging. But, 1. You must use your pastor as the ordained instrument and messenger of the Lord Jesus and his Spirit, appointed to speak a word in season to the weary, and to shew to man his righteousness, and to strengthen the weak hands and feeble knees; yea, and more, to bind and loose on earth, as Christ doth bind and loose in heaven. As Christ and his Spirit do only save in the principal place, and yet ministers save souls in subordination to them as his instruments; Acts xxvi. 17, 18. 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. James v. 20. So Christ and the Spirit are, as principal causes, the only comforters; but his ministers are comforters under him. 2. And that which you must expect from them are these two things. 1. You must expect those fuller discoveries of God's will than you are able to make yourself, by which you may have assurance of your duty to God, and of the sense of Scripture, which expresseth how God will deal with you: that so a clearer discovery of God's mind may resolve your doubts. 2. In the mean time, till you can come to a full resolution, you may and must somewhat stay yourself on the very judgment of your pastor: not as infallible, but as a discovery of the probability of your

good or bad estate ; and so of your duty also. Though you will not renounce your own understanding, and believe any man when you know he is deceived, or would deceive you, yet you will so far suspect your own reason, and value another's, as to have a special regard to every man's judgment in his own profession. If the physician tell you that your disease is not dangerous, or the lawyer that your cause is good, it will more comfort you than if another man should say as much. It may much stay your heart till you can reach to clear evidences and assurance, to have a pastor that is well acquainted with you, and is faithful and judicious, to tell you that he verily thinks that you are in a safe condition. 3. But the chief use of his advice is, not so much to tell you what he thinks of you, as to give you Directions how you may judge of yourself, and come out of your trouble : besides the benefit of his prayers to God for you.

4. Next let me tell you what men you must choose to open your mind to : and they must be, 1. Men of judgment and knowledge, and not the ignorant, be they never so honest : else they may deceive you, not knowing what they do ; either for want of understanding the Scripture, and the nature of grace and sin ; or for want of skill to deal with both weak consciences, and deep, deceitful hearts. 2. They must be truly fearing God, and of experience in this great work. For a troubled soul is seldom well resolved and comforted merely out of a book, but from the book and experience both together. Carnal or formal men will but make a jest at the doubts of a troubled Christian ; or at least will give you such formal remedies as will prove no cure : either they will persuade you, as the Antinomians do, that you should trust God with your soul, and never question your faith : or that you do ill to trouble yourself about such things : or they will direct you only to the comforts of general grace, and tell you only that God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners ; which are the necessary foundations of our peace ; but will not answer particular doubts of our own sincerity, and of our interest in Christ : or else they will make you believe that holiness of heart and life (which is the thing you look after) is it that troubleth you, and breeds all your scruples. Or else with the Papists, they will send you to your merits for comfort ; or to some vindictive penance in fastings, pilgrimages, or the like ; or to

some saint departed, or angel, or to the pardons or indulgences of the pope ; or to a certain formal, carnal devotion, to make God amends. 3. They must be men of downright faithfulness, that will deal plainly and freely, though not cruelly ; and not like those tender surgeons that will leave the cure undone for fear of hurting : meddle not with men-pleasers and daubers, that will presently speak comfort to you as confidently as if they had known you twenty years, when perhaps they know little of your heart or case. Deal not with such as resolve to humour you. 4. They must be men of fidelity, and well tried to be such, that you must trust them with those secrets which you are called to reveal. 5. They must be men of great staidness and wisdom, that they may neither rashly pass their judgment, nor set you upon unsound, unwarrantable, or dangerous courses. 6. It is suspicious if they be men that are so impudent as to draw out your secrets, and screw themselves deeper into your privatest thoughts and ways than is meet : yet a compassionate minister, when he seeth that poor Christians do endanger themselves by keeping secret their troubles, or else that they hazard themselves by hiding the greatest of their sins, like Achan, Saul, or Ananias and Sapphira, and so play the hypocrites ; in these cases he may and must urge them to deal openly. 7. Above all be sure that those that you seek advice of, be sound in the faith, and free from the two desperate plagues of notorious false doctrine, and separating, dividing inclinations, that do but hunt about to make disciples to themselves. There are two of the former sort, and three of the latter, that I would charge you to take heed of (and yet all is but four.) 1. Among those that err from the faith, (next to pagans, Jews, and infidels, whether Ranters, Seekers, or Socinians, which I think few sober, godly men are so much in danger of, because of their extreme vileness,) I would especially have you avoid the Antinomians, being the greatest pretenders to the right comforting afflicted consciences in the world ; but upon my certain knowledge I dare say, they are notorious subverters of the very nature of the Gospel, and that free grace which they so much talk of, and the great dishonourers of the Lord Jesus, whom they seem so highly to extol. They are those mountebanks and quacksalvers that delude the world by vain ostentation, and kill more than they will cure. 2. Next to

them, take heed of Papists, who will go to Rome, to saints, to angels, to merits, to the most carnal, delusory means for comfort, when they should go to Scripture and to heaven for it.

And then take heed that you fall not into the hands of separating dividers of Christ's church. The most notorious and dangerous of them are of these three sorts. 1. The last mentioned, the Papists: they are the most notorious schismatics and separatists that ever God's church did know on earth. For my part, I think their schism is more dangerous and wicked than the rest of their false doctrine. The unmerciful, proud, self-seeking wretches, would, like the Donatists, make us believe that God hath no true church on earth but they; and that all the Christians in Ethiopia, Asia, Germany, Hungary, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Belgia, and the rest of the world, that acknowledge not their pope of Rome to be head of all the churches in the world, are none of Christ's churches, nor ever were. Thus do they separate from all the churches on earth, and confine all religion and salvation to themselves, who so notoriously depart from Christ's way of salvation. Indeed the extreme diligence that they use in visiting the sick, and soliciting all men to their church and way, is plainly to get themselves followers; and they are everywhere more industrious to enlarge the pope's kingdom than Christ's. So far are they from studying the unity of the Catholic church, which they so much talk of, that they will admit none to be of that church, nor to be saved, but their own party, as if indeed the pope had the keys of heaven. Indeed they are the most impudent sectaries and schismatics on earth. 2. The next to them are the Anabaptists, whose doctrine is not in itself so dangerous as their schism, and gathering disciples so zealously to themselves. And so strange a curse of God hath followed them hitherto, as may deter any sober Christian from rash adventuring on their way. Even now when they are higher in the world than ever they were on earth, yet do the judicious see God's heavy judgment upon them, in their congregations and conversation. 3. Lastly, Meddle not with those commonly called Separatists, for they will make a prey of you for the increase of their party. I do not mean that you should separate from these two last, as they do from us, and have nothing to do with them, nor

acknowledge them Christians : but seek not their advice, and make them not of your counsel. You will do as one that goes to a physician that hath the plague, to be cured of a cut finger, if you go for your comfort to any of these seducers. But if you have a pastor that is sound in the main doctrines of religion, and is studious of the unity and peace of the church, such a man you may use, though in many things mistaken ; for he will not seek to make a prey of you by drawing you to his party ; let him be Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, Episcopal, Independent, or Presbyterian, so he be sound in the main, and free from division. Thus I have shewn you the qualifications of these men, that you must seek advice of.

2. Let me next add this ; Let them be rather pastors than private men, if it may be ; and rather your own pastors than others, if they are fit. For the first consider, 1. It is their office to be guides of Christ's disciples under him, and to be spiritual physicians for the curing of souls. And experience telleth us (and sadly of late) what a curse followeth those that step beyond the bounds of their calling by invading this office, and that God blesseth means to them that keep within his order ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Not but that private men may help you in this, as a private neighbour may give you a medicine to cure your disease ? but you will not so soon trust them in any weighty case as you will the physician. 2. Besides, ministers have made it the study of their lives, and therefore are liker to understand it than others. As for those that think long study no more conducive to the knowledge of the Scriptures, than if men studied not at all, they may as well renounce reason, and dispute for preeminency of beasts above men, as renounce study, which is but the use of reason. But it appears how considerately these men speak themselves, and whence it comes, and how much credit a sober Christian should give them ! Let them read Psalm i. 2, 3. Heb. v. 11—14. 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. and 2 Tim. ii. 15. and then let them return to their wits. Paul commands Timothy, though he was from his youth acquainted with the Scriptures, "Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." How much need have we to do so now ? 3. Also ministers are usually most experienced in this work ; and wisdom requires you no more

to trust your soul, than you would do your body, with an unexperienced man.

2. And if it may be (he being fit) let it be rather your own pastor than another: 1. Because it belongeth to his peculiar place and charge, to direct the souls of his own congregation. 2. Because he is likelier to know you, and to fit his advice to your estate, as having better opportunity than others to be acquainted with your conversation.

5. Next consider, in what manner you must open your grief, if you would have cure. 1. Do it as truly as you can. Make the matter neither better nor worse than it is. Especially take heed of dealing like Ananias, pretending to open all (as he did to give all) when you do but open some common infirmities, and hide all the most disgraceful distempers of your heart, and sins of your life. The vomit of confession must work to the bottom, and fetch up that hidden sin, which is it that continueth your calamity. Read Mr. T. Hooker in his "Soul's Preparation," concerning this confession, who shews you the danger of not going to the bottom.

2. You must not go to a minister to be cured merely by good words, as wizards do by charms; and so think that all is well when he hath spoken comfortably to you. But you must go for directions in your own practice, that so the cure may be done by leisure when you come home. Truly most even of the godly that I have known, do go to a minister for comfort, as silly people go to a physician for physic. If the physician could stroke them whole, or give them a pennyworth of some pleasant stuff that would cure all in an hour, then they would praise him. But alas, the cure will not be done, 1. Without cost. 2. Nor without time and patience. 3. Nor without taking down displeasing medicines; and so they let all alone. So you come to a minister for advice and comfort, and you look that his words should comfort you before he leaves you, or at least, some short, small direction to take home with you. But he tells you, if you will be cured you must more resolve against that disquieting corruption and passion; you must more meekly submit to reproof; you must walk more watchfully and conscionably with God and men; and then you must not give ear to the tempter, with many the like. He gives you, as I have done here, a bill of thirty several Directions, and tells you, you

must practise all these. O this seems a tedious course, you are never the nearer comfort for hearing these ; it must be by long and diligent practising them. Is it not a foolish patient that will come home from the physician, and say, ' I have heard all that he said, but I am never the better ? ' So you say, ' I have heard all that the minister said, and I have never the more comfort. ' But have you done all that he bid you, and taken all the medicines that he gave you ? Alas, the cure is most to be done by yourself (under Christ) when you come home. The minister is but the physician to direct you what course to take for the cure. And then as silly people run from one physician to another, hearing what all can say, and desirous to know what every man thinks of them, but thoroughly follow the advice of none, but perhaps take one medicine from one man, and one from another, and let most even of those lie by them in the box, and so perish more certainly than if they never meddled with any at all ; so do most troubled souls hear what one man saith, and what another saith, and seldom thoroughly follow the advice of any : but when one man's words do not cure them, they say, ' This is not the man that God hath appointed to cure me. ' And so another, and that is not the man : when they should rather say, ' This is not the way, ' than, ' This is not the man. ' This lazy complaining is not it that will do the work, but faithful practising the Directions given you.

But I know some will say, That it is near to Popish auricular confession, which I here persuade Christians to, and it is to bring Christians under the tyranny of the priests again, and make them acquainted with all men's secrets, and masters of their consciences.

Answ. 1. To the last I say to the railing devil of this age, no more but " The Lord rebuke thee. " If any minister have wicked ends, let the God of heaven convert him, or root him out of his church, and cast him among the weeds and briars. But is it not the known voice of sensuality and hell, to cast reproaches upon the way and ordinances of God ? Who knoweth not that it is the very office of the ministry, to be teachers and guides to men in matters of salvation, and overseers of them ? and that they watch for their souls, as those that must give an account, and the people, therefore, bound to obey them ? Heb. xiii. 7. 17. Should not the shepherd know his sheep, and their stray-

ings and diseases; how else shall he cure them? Should not the physician hear the patient open all his disease, yea, study to discover to the utmost every thing he knows; and all little enough to the cure? A disease unknown is unlike to be cured; and a disease well known is half cured. Mr. Thomas Hooker saith truly, it is with many people as with some over-modest patients, who having a disease in some secret place, they will not for shame reveal it to the physician till it be past cure, and then they must lose their lives by their modesty: so do many by their secret and more disgraceful sins. Not that every man is bound to open all his sins to his pastor; but those that cannot well be otherwise cured, he must; either if the sense of the guilt cannot be removed, and true assurance of pardon obtained: or else, if power against the sin be not otherwise obtained, but that it still prevaieth; in both these cases we must go to those that God hath made our directors and guides. I am confident many a thousand souls do long strive against anger, lust, flesh-pleasing, worldliness, and trouble of conscience to little purpose, who if they would but have taken God's way, and sought for help, and opened all their case to their minister, they might have been delivered in a good measure long ago. 2. And for Popish confession, I detest it. We would not persuade men that there is a necessity of confessing every sin to a minister, before it can be pardoned. Nor do we do it in a perplexed formality only at one time of the year; nor in order to Popish pardons or satisfactions; but we would have men go for physic to their souls, as they do for their bodies, when they feel they have need. And let me advise all Christian congregations to practise this excellent duty more. See that you knock oftener at your pastor's door, and ask his advice in all your pressing necessities; do not let him sit quietly in his study for you; make him know by experience, that the tenth part of a minister's labour is not in the pulpit. If your sins are strong, and you have wounded conscience deep, go for his advice for a safe cure; many a man's sore festers to damnation for want of this; and poor, ignorant and scandalous sinners have more need to do this than troubled consciences. I am confident, if the people of my congregation did but do their duty for the good of their own souls in private, seeking advice of their ministers, and opening their cases to them,

they would find work for ten ministers at least; and yet those two that they have, have more work than they are able to do already. Especially ministers in small country congregations, might do abundance of good this way; and their people are much to blame that they come not oftener to them for advice; this were the way to make Christians indeed. The devil knows this, and therefore so envies it, that he never did more against a design in the world; he hath got the maintenance alienated that should have maintained them, that so they may have but one minister in a congregation, and then among the greater congregations this work is impossible for want of instruments; yea, he is about getting down the very churches and settled ministry, if God will suffer him. He setteth his instruments to rail at priests and discipline, and to call Christ's yoke tyranny; because while the garden is hedged in, he is fain, with envy, to look over the hedge. What if a man (like those of our times) should come to a town that hath an epidemical pleurisy or fever, and say, 'Do not run like fools to these physicians, they do but cheat you, and rob your purses, and seek themselves, and seek to be lords of your lives.' It is possible some do so; but if by these persuasions the silly people should lose their lives, how well had their new preacher befriended them? Such friends will those prove at last to your souls, that dissuade you from obeying the guidance and discipline of your overseers, and dare call the ordinances of the Lord of glory tyrannical, and reproach those that Christ hath set over them. England will not have Christ by his officers rule over them, and the several congregations will not obey him. But he will make them know, before many years are past, that they refused their own mercy, and knew not the things that belong to their peace, and that he will be master at last in spite of their malice, and the proudest of his foes. If they get by this bargain of refusing Christ's government, and despising his ministers, and making the peace, unity, and prosperity of his church, and the souls of men, a prey to their proud misguided fancies and passions, then let them boast of the bargain when they have tried it. Only I would entreat one thing of them, not to judge too confidently till they have seen the end.

And for all you tender-conscienced Christians, whom by the ministry the Lord hath begotten or confirmed to himself,

as ever you will shew yourselves thankful for so great a mercy, as ever you will hold that you have got, or grow to more perfection, and attain that blessed life to which Christ hath given you his ministers to conduct you; see that you stick close to a judicious, godly, faithful ministry, and make use of them while you have them. Have you strong lusts, or deep wounds in conscience, or a heavy burden of doubtings or distress? Seek their advice. God will have his own ordinance and officers have the chief instrumental hand in your cure. The same means oftentimes in another hand shall not do it. Yet I would have you make use of all able private Christians' help also.

I will tell you the reason why our ministers have not urged this so much upon you, nor so plainly acquainted their congregations with the necessity of opening your case to your minister, and seeking his advice.

1. Some in opposition to Popery have gone too far on the other extreme; perhaps sinning as deeply in neglect, as the Papists do in formal excess. It is a good sign that an opinion is true, when it is near to error. For truth is the very next step to error. The small thread of truth runs between the close adjoining extremes of error.

2. Some ministers knowing the exceeding greatness of the burden, are loath to put themselves upon it. This one work, of giving advice to all that ought to come and open their case to us, if our people did but what they ought to do for their own safety, would itself, in great congregations, be more than preaching every day in the week. What then is all the rest of the work? And how can one man, yea, or five, do this to five thousand souls? And then when it lieth undone, the malicious reproachers rail at the ministers, and accuse the people of unfitness to be church-members; which howsoever there may be some cause of, yet not so much as they suggest; and that unfitness would best be cured by the diligence of more labourers, which they think to cure, by removing the few that do remain.

3. Also some ministers seeing that they have more work than they can do already, think themselves incapable of more, and therefore that it is vain to put their people on it, to seek more.

4. Some ministers are over-modest, and think it to be unfit to desire people to open their secrets to them; in con-

fessing their sins and corrupt inclinations, and opening their wants ; and indeed any ingenuous man will be backward to pry into the secrets of others. But when God hath made it our office, under Christ, to be physicians to the souls of our people, it is but bloody cruelty to connive at their pride and carnal bashfulness, or hypocritical covering of their sins, and to let them die of their disease rather than we will urge them to disclose it.

5. Some ministers are loath to tell people of their duty in this, lest it should confirm the world in their malicious conceit, that we should be masters of men's consciences, and would lord it over them. This is as much folly and cruelty, as if the master and pilot of the ship should let the mariners govern the ship by the major vote, and run all on shelves, and drown themselves and him, and all for fear of being thought lordly and tyrannical, in taking the government of the ship upon himself, and telling the mariners that it is their duty to obey him.

6. Most godly ministers do tell people in general, of the necessity of such a dependance on their teachers, as learners in the school of Christ should have on them that are ushers under him the chief master ; and they do gladly give advice to those that do seek to them : but they do not so particularly and plainly acquaint people with their duty, in opening to them the particular sores of their souls.

It is also the policy of the devil, to make people believe that their ministers are too stout, and will not stoop to a compassionate hearing of their case ; especially if ministers carry themselves strangely, at too great a distance from their people. I would earnestly entreat all ministers therefore to be as familiar, and as much with their people as they can. Papists and other seducers, will insinuate themselves into their familiarity, if we be strange. If you teach them not in their houses, these will creep into their houses, and lead them captive. I persuade others of my brethren to that which myself am disabled from performing ; being by constant weakness (besides unavoidable business) confined to my chamber. But those that can perform it, will find this a most necessary and profitable work. And let not poor people believe the devil, who tells them that ministers are so proud, only to discourage them from seeking their advice. Go try them once before you believe it.

Lastly, Remember this, that it is not enough that you once opened your case to your pastor, but do it as often as necessity urgeth you to call for his advice ; though not on every light occasion. Live in such a dependance on the advice and guidance of your pastor (under Christ) for your soul, as you do on the advice of the physician for your body. Read Mal. ii. 7. And let ministers read 6. 8, 9.

Direct. XXXII. ‘ As ever you would live in peace and comfort, and well-pleasing unto God, be sure that you understand and deeply consider wherein the height of a Christian life, and the greatest part of our duty doth consist ; to wit, ‘ In a loving delight in God, and a thankful and cheerful obedience to his will ; and then make this your constant aim, and be still aspiring after it, and let all other affections and endeavours be subservient unto this.’

This one rule well practised, would do wonders on the souls of poor Christians, in dispelling all their fears and troubles, and helping not only to a settled peace, but to live in the most comfortable state that can be expected upon earth. Write therefore these two or three words deep in your understandings and memory ; that the life which God is best pleased with, and we should be always endeavouring, is, A loving delight in God through Christ ; and a thankful and cheerful obedience to him. I do not say, that godly sorrows, and fears, and jealousies are no duties ; but these are the great duties, to which the rest should all subserve. Misapprehending the state of duty, and the very nature of a Christian life, must needs make sad distempers in men’s hearts and conversations. Many Christians look upon brokenheartedness, and much grieving, and weeping for sin, as if it were the great thing that God delighteth in, and requireth of them ; and therefore they bend their endeavours this way ; and are still striving with their hearts to break them more, and wringing their consciences to squeeze out some tears ; and they think no sermon, no prayer, no meditation, speeds so well with them, as that which can help them to grieve or weep. I am far from persuading men against humiliation and godly sorrow, and tenderness of heart. But yet I must tell you, that this is a sore error that you lay so much upon it, and so much overlook that great and noble work and state to which it tendeth. Do you think that God hath any pleasure in your sorrows as

such? Doth it do him good to see you dejected, afflicted, and tormented? Alas, it is only as your sorrows do kill your sins, and mortify your fleshly lusts, and prepare for your peace and joys, that God regards them. Because God doth speak comfortably to troubled, drooping spirits, and tells them that he delighteth in the contrite, and loveth the humble, and bindeth up the brokenhearted; therefore men misunderstanding him, do think they should do nothing, but be still breaking their own hearts. Whereas God speaks it but partly to shew his hatred to the proud, and partly to shew his tender compassions to the humbled, that they might not be overwhelmed or despair. But, O Christians, understand and consider, that all your sorrows are but preparatives to your joys; and that it is a higher and sweeter work that God calls you to, and would have you spend your time and strength in.

1. The first part of it is love. A work that is wages to itself. He that knows what it is to live in the love of God, doth know that Christianity is no tormenting and discontented life.
2. The next part is, "Delight in God, and in the hopes and forethoughts of everlasting glory." Psal. xxvii. 4. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." This is it that you should be bending your studies and endeavours for, that your soul might be able to delight itself in God.
3. The third part is thankfulness and praise. Though I say not as some, that we should be moved by no fears or desires of the reward (that is, of God), but act only from thankfulness (as though we had all that we expect already) yet let me desire you to take special notice of this truth; that thankfulness must be the main principle of all Gospel-obedience. And this is not only true of the regenerate after faith, but even the wicked themselves, who are called to repent and believe, are called to do it in a glad and thankful sense of the mercy offered them in Christ. All the world being fallen under God's wrath and deserved condemnation, and the Lord Jesus having become a sacrifice and ransom for all, and so brought all from that legal necessity of perishing which they were under, the Gospel which brings them the news of this, is glad tidings of great joy to them; and the very justifying act which they are called to, is, thankfully to accept Christ as one that hath already satisfied for their sins, and will save them, if they accept him, and will follow his saving counsel,

and use his saving means ; and the saving work which they must proceed in, is, thankfully to obey that Redeemer whom they believe in. So that as general redemption is the very foundation of the new world and its government, so thankfulness for this redemption is the very life of justifying faith and Gospel obedience. And therefore the denial of this universal redemption (as to the price and satisfaction) doth both disable wicked men (if they receive it) from coming to Christ by true justifying faith (which is, the thankful acceptance of Christ as he is offered with his benefits): and this thankfulness must be for what he hath done in dying for us ; as well as for what he will do in pardoning and saving us, and it doth disable all true believers from Gospel, grateful obedience, whenever they lose the sight of their evidences of special grace (which, alas, how ordinary is it with them !) For when they cannot have special grace in their eye to be thankful for, according to this doctrine they must have none ; because they can be no surer that Christ died for them, than they are that themselves are sincere believers and truly sanctified. And when thankfulness for Christ's death and redemption ceaseth, Gospel obedience ceaseth, and legal and slavish terrors do take place. Though the same cannot be said of thankfulness for special renewing, pardoning grace.

4. The fourth part of the Christian life is cheerful obedience. God loveth a cheerful giver, and so he doth in every part of obedience, "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, thou shalt serve thy enemies in hunger and thirst," &c. Deut. xxviii. 47.

Will you now lay all this together, and make it for the time to come your business, and try whether it will not be the truest way to comfort, and make your life a blessed life ? Will you make it your end in hearing, reading, praying, and meditation, to raise your soul to delight in God ? Will you strive as much to work it to this delight as ever you did to work it to sorrow ? Certainly you have more reason ; and certainly there is more matter of delight in the face and love of God, than in all the things in the world besides. Consider but the Scripture commands, and then lay to heart your duty. Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice." Chap. iii. 1. Zech. x. 7. Joel ii. 23. Isa.

lxi. 16. Psal. xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright." Psal. xcvii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 16. "Rejoice evermore." 1 Pet. i. 6. 8. Rom. v. ii. John iv. 36. Psal. v. 11. xxxiii. 21. xxxv. 9. lxvi. 6. lxviii. 3, 4. lxxi. 23. lxxxix. 16. cv. 3. cxlix. 2. xliii. 4. xxvii. 6. John xvi. 24. Rom. xv. 13. xiv. 17. "The kingdom of God is in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Gal. v. 22. Psal. xxxii. 11. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice O ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." Psal. cxxxiii. 9. 16. v. 11. xxxv. 27. Heb. iii. 18. With a hundred more the like. Have you made conscience of this great duty according to its excellency and these pressing commands of God? Have you made conscience of the duties of praise, thanksgiving, and cheerful obedience, as much as for grieving for sin? Perhaps you will say, 'I cannot do it for want of assurance. If I knew that I were one of the righteous, and upright in heart, then I could be glad, and shout for joy.' *Answ.* 1. I have before shewed you how you may know that; when you discover it in yourself, see that you make more conscience of this duty. 2. You have had hopes and probabilities of your sincerity. Did you endeavour to answer those probabilities in your joys? 3. If you would but labour to get this delight in God, it would help you to assurance; for it would be one of your clearest evidences.

O how the subtle enemy disadvantageth the Gospel, by the misapprehensions and dejected spirits of believers! It is the very design of the ever blessed God, to glorify love and mercy as highly in the work of redemption, as ever he glorified omnipotency in the work of creation. And he hath purposely unhinged the Sabbath which was appointed to commemorate that work of power in creation, to the first day of the week, That it might be spent as a weekly day of thanksgiving and praise for the now more glorious work of redemption, that love might not only be equally admired with power, but even go before it. So that he hath laid the foundation of the kingdom of grace in love and mercy; and in love and mercy hath he framed the whole structure of the edifice; and love and mercy are written in legible indelible characters upon every piece. And the whole frame of his work and temple-service, hath he so composed, that all might be the resounding echos of love, and the praise and

glorious commemoration of love and mercy might be the great business of our solemn assemblies. And the new creation within us, and without us, is so ordered, that love, thankfulness, and delight, might be both the way and the end. And the serpent who most opposeth God where he seeketh most glory, especially the glory of his grace, doth labour so successfully to obscure this glory, that he hath brought multitudes of poor Christians to have poor, low thoughts of the riches of his grace. And to set every sin of theirs against it, which should but advance it; and even to question the very foundation of the whole building, whether Christ hath redeemed the world by his sacrifice. Yea, he puts such a vail over the glory of the Gospel, that men can hardly be brought to receive it as glad tidings, till they first have assurance of their own sanctification! And the very nature of God's kingdom is so unknown, that some men think it to be unrighteousness, and libertinism, and others to be pensive dejections, and tormenting scruples and fears; and but few know it to be righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And the very business of a Christian's life and God's service, is rather taken to be scrupling, quarrelling, and vexing ourselves and the church of God, than to be love and gratitude, and a delighting our souls in God, and cheerfully obeying him. And thus when Christianity seems a thralldom and torment; and the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, seems the only freedom, and quiet, and delight, no wonder if the devil have more unfeigned servants than Christ; and if men tremble at the name of holiness, and fly away from religion as a mischief. What can be more contrary to its nature, and to God's design in forming it, than for the professors to live such dejected and dolorous lives? God calls men from vexation and vanity, to high delights and peace. And men come to God as from peace and pleasure to vexation. All our preaching will do little to win souls from sensuality to holiness, while they look upon the sad lives of the professors of holiness; as it will more deter a sick man from meddling with a physician, to see all that he hath had in hand to lie languishing in continual pains to their death, than all his words and promises will encourage them. O what blessed lives might God's people live, if they understood the love of God in the mystery of man's redemption, and did addict themselves to

the consideration and improvement of it, and did believingly eye the promised glory, and hereupon did make it the business of their lives to delight their souls in him that hath loved them ! And what a wonderful success might we expect to our preaching, if the holy delights and cheerful obedience of the saints did preach, as clearly to the eyes of the world, as we preach loudly to their ears.

But flesh will be flesh yet awhile ! And unbelief will be unbelief ! We are all to blame ! The Lord forgive our overlooking his lovingkindness ; and our dishonouring the glorious Gospel of his Son ; and our seconding satan, in his contradicting of that design which hath contrived God's glory in so sweet a way.

And now, Christian reader, let me entreat thee in the name and fear of God, hereafter better to understand and practise thy duty. Thy heart is better a thousand times in godly sorrow than in carnal mirth, and by such sorrow it is often made better ; Eccles. vii. 2—4. But never take it to be right till it be delighting itself in God. When you kneel down in prayer, labour so to conceive of God, and bespeak him that he may be your delight ; so do in hearing and reading ; so do in all your meditations of God ; so do in your feasting on the flesh and blood of Christ at his supper. Especially improve the happy opportunity of the Lord's day, wherein you may wholly devote yourselves to this work. And I advise ministers and all Christ's redeemed ones, that they spend more of those days in praise and thanksgiving, especially in commemoration of the whole work of redemption (and not of Christ's resurrection alone) or else they will not answer the institution of the Lord. And that they keep it as the most solemn day of thanksgiving, and be more brief on that day in their confessions and lamentations, and larger at other times ! O that the congregations of Christ through the world were so well informed and animated, that the main business of their solemn assemblies on that day might be to sound forth the high praises of their Redeemer ; and to begin here the praises of God and the Lamb, which they must perfect in heaven for ever ! How sweet a foretaste of heaven would be then in these solemnities ! And truly, let me tell you, my brethren of the ministry, you should by private teaching and week-day sermons, so further the knowledge of your people, that

you might not be forced to spend so much of the Lord's day in sermons as the most godly use to do ; but might bestow a greater part of it in psalms and solemn praises to our Redeemer. And I could wish that the ministers of England, to that end, would unanimously agree on some one translation of the English Psalms in metre, better than that in common use, and if it may be, better than any yet extant (not neglecting the poetical sweetness under pretence of exact translating), or at least to agree on the best now extant ; (the London ministers may do well to lead the way) lest that blessed part of God's solemn worship should be blemished for want either of reformation or uniformity. And in my weak judgment, if hymns and psalms of praise were new invented, as fit for the state of the Gospel church and worship (to laud the Redeemer come in the flesh, as expressly as the work of grace is now express) as David's Psalms were fitted to the former state and infancy of the church, and more obscure revelations of the Mediator and his grace, it would be no sinful, human invention or addition ; nor any more want of warrant, than our inventing the form and words of every sermon that we preach, and every prayer that we may make, or any catechism or confession of faith. Nay, it may seem of so great usefulness, as to be next to a necessity. (Still provided that we force not any to the use of them that through ignorance may scruple it.) And if there be any convenient parcels of the ancient church that are fitted to this use, they should deservedly be preferred. I do not think I digress all this while from the scope of my discourse. For doubtless if God's usual solemn worship on the Lord's days were more fitted and directed to a pleasant, delightful, praising way, it would do very much to frame the spirits of Christians to joyfulness, and thankfulness, and delight in God ; than which there is no greater cure for their doubtful, pensive, self-tormenting frame. O try this, Christians, at the request of one that is moved by God to importune you to it ! God doth pity you in your sorrows ! But he delighteth in you when you delight in him. See Isai. lviii. 14. compared with Zeph. iii. 17. And if sin interpose and hinder your delights, believe it, a cheerful amendment and obedience is that which will please God better than your self-tormenting fears. Do not you like that servant better that will go cheerfully about your

work, and do it as well as he can, accounting it a recreation, and will endeavour to mend where he hath done amiss, than him that will at every step fall a crying, "O I am so weak, I can do nothing as I should." A humble sense of failings you will like; but not that your servant should sit still and complain when he should be working; nor that all your service should be performed with weeping, disquietness and lamentations; you had rather have your servant humbly and modestly cheerful, and not always dejected, for fear of displeasing you. O how many poor souls are overseen in this! You might easily perceive it even by the devil's opposition and temptations. He will further you in your self-vexations (when he cannot keep you in security and presumption), but in amending, he will hinder you with all his might. How oft have I known poor, passionate creatures, that would vex and rage in anger, and break out in unseemly language, to the disquieting of all about them; and others that would drop into other the like sins, and when they have done lament it, and condemn themselves; and yet would not set upon a resolute and cheerful reformation! Nay, if you do but reprove them for any sin, they will sooner say, 'If I be so bad, God will condemn me for an hypocrite,' and so lie down in disquietness and distress; than they will say, 'I see my sin, and I resolve to resist it, and I pray you warn me of it, and help me to watch against it. So that they would bring us to this pass, that either we must let them alone with their sins, for fear of tormenting them, or else we must cause them to lie down in terrors. Alas, poor mistaken souls! It is neither of these that God calls for! Will you do any thing save what you should do? Must you needs be esteemed either innocent, or hypocrites, or such as shall be damned? The thing that God would have is this; That you would be glad that you see your fault, and thank him that sheweth it you, and resolvedly do your best to amend it, and this in faith and cheerful confidence in Christ, flying to his Spirit for help and victory. Will you please the devil so far, and so far contradict the gracious way of Christ, as that you will needs either sit still or despair? Is there not a middle between these two? To wit, cheerful amendment? Remember that it is not your vexation or despair, but your obedience and peace that God

desireth. That life is most pleasing to him, which is most safe and sweet to you.

If you say still, you cannot delight in God, I say again, Do but acknowledge it the great work that God requireth of you, and make it your daily aim, and care, and business, and then you will more easily and certainly attain it. But while you know not your work, or so far mistake it, as to think it consisteth more in sorrows and fears; and never endeavour, in your duties or meditations, to raise your soul to a delight in God, but rather to cast down yourself with still poring on your miseries, no wonder then if you be a stranger to this life of holy delight.

By this time I find myself come up to the subject of my book of the "Saints' Rest;" wherein having said so much to direct and excite you, for the attainment of these spiritual and heavenly delights, I will refer you to it, for your help in that work; and add no more here, but to desire you, through the course of your life, to remember, That the true love of God in Christ, and delight in him, and thankful, cheerful obedience to him, is the great work of a Christian, which God is best pleased with, and which the blessed angels and saints shall be exercised in for ever.

And O thou the blessed God of love, the Father of mercy, the Prince of peace, the Spirit of consolation, compose the disquieted spirits of thy people, and the tumultuous, disjointed state of thy churches; and pardon our rashness, contentions, and blood-guiltiness, and give us not up to the state of the wicked, who are like the raging sea, and to whom there is no peace! Lay thy command on our winds and waves, before thy shipwrecked vessel perish; and rebuke that evil spirit whose name is Legion, which hath possessed so great a part of thine inheritance. Send forth the spirit of judgment and meekness into thy churches, and save us from our pride and ignorance with their effects; and bring our feet into the way of peace, which hitherto we have not known. O close all thy people speedily in loving consultations, and earnest inquiries after peace. Let them return from their corruptions, contentions, and divisions, and jointly seek thee, asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; saying, Come let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. Blast all

opposing policies and powers. Say to these dead and dry bones, Live. And out of these ruins do thou yet erect a city of righteousness, where thy people may dwell together in peaceable habitations; and in the midst thereof a temple to thy holiness: let the materials of it be verity and purity: let the Redeemer be its foundation: let love and peace cement it into unity: let thy laver and covenant be the doors; and holiness to the Lord be engraven thereon; that buyers and sellers may be cast out, and the common and unclean may know their place; and let no desolating abomination be there set up. But let thy people all in one name, in one faith, with one mind, and one soul, attend to thine instructions, and wait for thy laws, and submit unto thine order, and rejoice in thy salvation; that the troubled spirits may be there exhilarated, the dark enlightened, and all may offer thee the sacrifice of praise, (without disaffections, discords, or divisions;) that so thy people may be thy delight, and thou mayest be the chiefest delight of thy people; and they may please thee through him that hath perfectly pleased thee. Or if our expectation of this happiness on earth be too high, yet give us so much as may enlighten our eyes, and heal those corruptions which estrange us from thee, and may propagate thy truth, increase thy church, and honour thy holiness, and may quicken our desires, and strengthen us in our way, and be a foretaste to us of the everlasting rest.

END OF THE RIGHT METHOD FOR A SETTLED PEACE OF
CONSCIENCE.

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END OF THE RIGHT METHOD FOR A SETTLED PEAPE OR CHURCH IN THE CONSCIENCE.

THE
CRUCIFYING OF THE WORLD

BY THE
CROSS OF CHRIST.

WITH A PREFACE TO THE NOBLES, GENTLEMEN, AND ALL THE
RICH, DIRECTING THEM HOW THEY MAY BE RICHER.

“ Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world : if any man love the
world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

1 JOHN II. 15.

THE

CRUCIFYING OF THE WORLD

CROSS OF CHRIST

WITH A PREFACE TO THE NOBLES, GENTLEMEN, AND ALL THE
HIGH DIRECTING THEM HOW THEY MAY BE BLESSED

IN THE USE OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

BY

THE

THE
EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO MY WORTHY FRIEND,

THOMAS FOLEY, Esq.

SIR,

UPON a double account I have thought it meet to direct this Treatise first to you. First, Because the first embryo of it was an Assize Sermon preached at your desire, when you were high sheriff of this county, which drew me to add more, till it swelled to this, which some of my brethren have persuaded to venture into the open world. Secondly, Because God hath given you a heart to be exemplary in practising the doctrine here delivered: and I think I shall teach men the more successfully, when I can shew them a living lesson for their imitation. I never knew that you refused a work of charity that was motioned to you; but oft have you offered me that for the church's service, which I was not ready to accept and improve. I would not do you the displeasure as to mention this, but that forward charity is grown so rare in many places, that some may grow shortly to think that we preach to them of a chimera, a non-existent thing, if we do not tell them where it is to be seen: especially now infidelity is grown up to that strength, that seeing is taken by many for the only true informer of their reason, and believing for an unreasonable thing. And I take myself to owe much thankfulness to God, when I see him choose a faithful steward for any of his gifts. It is a sign he meaneth good by it to his church.

Some rich men sacrifice all they have to their bellies, which are their gods, even to an epicurean momentary delight, and cast all into the filthy sink of their sensuality; these are worse than infidels, defrauding their posterity; and swine alive, but worse than swine when they are dead.

Some rich men are provident, but it is only for their posterity. The ravenous brutes are greedy for their young. Some will begin to be bountiful at death, and give that to God which they can keep no longer, as if he would be thus bribed to receive their souls, and forgive their worldly hearts and lives. Some will give in their lifetime; but it is but part of their sinful gains; like the thief that would pay tithes of all that he had stolen. Some give a part of their more lawful increase, but it is against their will; it being forced from them by law, for church and poor; and therefore properly it is no gift. Some will give freely, but it is on some corrupt design, to strengthen a party, or a carnal interest, or make their way to some preferment. Some give, but only to those of their own opinion, and not to a disciple in the name of a disciple. Some give in contention, as the troublers of the church of Corinth preached, to add afflictions to our bonds; as many of the Papists, that think by their works of charity, they are warranted uncharitably to slander almost all besides themselves: as if we were all enemies to good works, or Solifidians, that took them for indifferent things, or made them not our business. Yea, the best work that the Jesuits ever did, even the preaching of the Gospel to the heathens, they would not endure us to join with them in, where they could hinder us, unless we would do it in their Papal way. Some will do good, to stop the cries of a guilty conscience, for some secret odious sin which they live in. Some will be liberal with the hypocrite for applause. And some will give with a pharisaical conceit of merit (even 'ex condigno,' from the proportion of their work to the reward, as the greatest Popish doctors teach). Some through mere fears of being damned, will be liberal, especially out of their superfluities; choosing rather to forsake their money than their sin. Some do pretend the highest ends, and that it is Christ himself to whom they do devote it; but they will part with no more than the flesh can spare: and that they may yet seem to be true Christians, they will not believe that any thing is a duty, which requireth much self-denial, and standeth not with their prosperity in the world. And some will give much out of a mere natural kindness of disposition, or upon mere natural motives; though not as to Christ, nor from the love of God, nor from that spirit of Christian special love, by which the members

of Christ have their communion. What excellent precepts of clemency and beneficence hath Seneca? Yea, what abundance of self-denial doth he seem to join with them? And yet so strange was this highest naturalist, to the truest charity or self-denial, that it is self that is his principle, end, and all. For a man to be sufficient for himself, and happy in himself, without troubling God by prayer, or needing man, was the sum of his religion. Pride was their master-virtue, which with us is the greatest vice. And for all his seeming contempt of riches and pleasures, yet Seneca keeps up in such a height of riches and greatness, as that he was like to have been emperor. And sometimes to be drunken he commends, to drive away cares and raise the mind; pleading the example of Solon and Agesilaus; confessing that drunkenness was objected even to Cato, their highest pattern of virtue; affirming, that the objectors may sooner make the crime honest, than Cato dishonest.

Among all this seeming charity and self-denial, that proveth not a sanctified heart, how excellent (but too rare) is the true self-denial and charity of the Christian; who hath quit all pretence of title to himself, or any thing that he hath, and hath consecrated himself and all to God; resolving to employ himself and it entirely for him; studying only to be well informed, which way it is that God would have him lay it out. And among these saints themselves, how rare is that excellent man, that is covetous and laborious for God, and for the church, and for his brethren; and that doth as providently get and keep, and as painfully labour, (how rich soever he be) and as much pinch his flesh (in prudent moderation) that he may have the more to give and to do good with, and make the best of his master's stock, as other men do in making provision for the flesh, and laying up for their posterity.

Sir, as far as you have proceeded in this Christian art, you are yet in the world among the snares and limetwigs of the devil, in a station that makes salvation difficult; and therefore have need of daily watchfulness, and to proceed and persevere in an enmity to the world, and a believing crucifixion of it, if you will be saved from it, and restore it to its proper use, and captivate it, that captivateth so many. As some help hereunto, I crave your perusal of this Treatise. And that it may do you good, and the many blessings pro-

mised to the charitable may rest upon you, and on your yokefellow, (that hath learned this crucifying of the world) and upon your posterity, shall be the prayers of

Your Fellow-soldier against the Flesh and World,

RICHARD BAXTER.

February 20, 1657.

THE
PREFACE,

TO THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY, AND ALL THAT HAVE
THE RICHES OF THIS WORLD.

Honourable, Worshipful, &c.

HAVING written here of a subject that nearly concerneth you, I have thought it my duty to give you a place, and according to your dignity the first place in the application of it. Of which I shall first tender you my reasons, and then set before you the matter of this address.

1. You are among us the most eminent and honoured persons, and therefore not to be neglected and passed by : you are first, and therefore should first be served. You hold yourselves most worthy of any temporal honour that is to be had ; and therefore I shall honour you so much more, as to judge you fit to be first spoken to by the ministers of Christ, in a case that doth much concern you. As you have, and would have the precedency in worldly matters, here also you shall have the precedency. It is pity that you should be first in hell, that are first in a Christian state on earth ; or that you should be least in the kingdom of heaven, that are greatest in that which is esteemed in the world. 2. You are pillars in the commonwealth, and the stakes that bear up the rest of the hedge. Your influence is great in lower bodies. You sin not to yourselves only ; nor are you gracious only to yourselves. The spots in the moon are seen by more, and its eclipses felt by more, than the blemishes or changes of many of us inferior wights. You are our first figures, that stand for more in matters of public concernment, than all that follow. You are the copies that the rest write after, and they are more prone to copy out your vices than your graces. You are the first sheets in the press.

You are the stewards of God, who are entrusted with his talents for the use of many. You are the noble members of the body politic, whose health or sickness is communicated to the rest: if you be ungodly, the whole body languisheth; if you live and prosper, it will go the better with us all: for your wisdom, and holiness, and justice will be operative; and your station alloweth you great advantage to work upon many, and to emulate a kind of universal causality. Interest is the world's bias, and all power hath respect to use. You that have possession of the treasure that is so commonly and highly esteemed, may do much to lead the sensual world by it, which way you please. Be it better or be it worse, they will follow him that bears the purse. If money can do wonders, you may do wonders. As money can persuade the blind to part with God and life everlasting, and to renounce religion and reason itself, so no doubt but it might do something, were it faithfully used, though not directly to sanctify the heart, yet somewhat to incline it to the means by which it may be sanctified. You that have power to help or hurt, to make it summer or winter to your subjects, and to promote or cross the interest of the flesh, are hereby become a kind of gods in the eyes of them that mind this interest, (as in higher respects you are unto believers). Especially seeing they want that eye of faith, by which they should know the Sovereign Majesty, who at his pleasure doth dispose both of you and them; these purblind sinners can reach no further, but are contented to be ruled by you, as terrestrial deities: they see you, but they see not God; they know you, and perceive the effects of your favour and displeasure; but being dead to God, and savouring only fleshly things, they scarce observe his smiles or frowns. They see that which is visible to the eye, which they have the use of; but the objects of faith are to them as nothing, because they have no eye to see them. And seeing you have such public interest and influence, it is our duty first to look after your souls, and to see that you receive the heavenly impress. 3. To which I may add, that no men have usually more need of advice and help than you; for your temptations are the strongest. The world killeth by its flatteries; it is not the having it, but the loving it, that undoes men: and he is much more likely to overlove it, that hath what he would have, and liveth in plentiful provi-

sions for his flesh, than he that hath nothing from it but trouble and vexation. It is not poverty, and prisons, and sickness, that are the flattering panders of the world, but prosperity and content to the flesh. Though I know that many of the poor do most of all overvalue the world, because they never tried so much of its vanity, but standing at a distance from prosperity, do think it a greater felicity than it is; for those are most in love with the world, that least know it; as those that least know him, are least in love with God and eternal glory. But yet it is pleasing, and not displeasing, flattering rather than buffeting, that is the means of deceiving silly souls, and stealing their hearts from God to the world: your mountains lie open to stronger winds than our valleys do: and gulfs and greater streams are not so fordable as our more shallow waters. He never studied God and heaven, nor his own heart, that knoweth not that it is a very difficult thing, to have a heavenly mind in earthly prosperity, and to live in the desires of another world, while we feel all seems to go well with us in this. How hard to be weaned from the world, till we suffer in it; yea, till we are plunged into an utter despair of ever receiving here the satisfaction of our desires! 4. And truly we have too much sad experience of the sensuality and ungodliness of most of the rich, to suffer us to think that you have least need of our admonitions: which leadeth me up to the matter of my address, which is first to complain of you to yourselves, and then to admonish you, and lastly to direct you.

1. I know I speak to those (for the most part) that profess to believe a life to come; but O that you had the honesty to live as you do profess! You durst not put it into your creed, that you believe that earth is more desirable than heaven, and that it is better seek first after carnal prosperity and delight, than for the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. You would be ashamed to say that it is the wisest course first to make provision for the flesh, and to put off God and your salvation with the leavings of the world. And do you think it is not as bad and as dangerous to do so, as to say so? Would it bring you to your journey's end, to be of the opinion that you should be up and going, as long as you sit still? Right opinions in religion are so unlikely to save a man that crosseth them in his practice, that such shall be beaten with many stripes. I had ra-

ther be in the case of many a popish friar, that renounceth the world, though in a way that hath many errors, than in the case of many an orthodox gentleman that is drowned in the cares and pleasures of this life : yea, I think it will be easier for a Socrates, a Plato, in the day of judgment, than for such. Christianity is a practical religion ; it is a devoted seeking for another life, by the improvement and contempt of this. Put not that into your life, that you are ashamed to put into your profession or belief. If you do as infidels, you will be as miserable as if you believed but as infidels. And practising awhile against your conscience, may cause God to forsake your judgment also, and give you over to believe as you live, because you would not live as you believed. And I fear that this is the case of some of you : nay, I have too much reason to know it, that some of our gentry, even persons of note and honour among us, have forsaken Christ, and are turned infidels ; and by the love of this world, have carnally adhered to it so long, till they are so far forsaken of God, as to think that there is no other life for them hereafter. God hath an eye on these wretches ; and men have an eye on some of them. I shall now leave them in their slippery station, till a fitter opportunity. Some we have of our nobility and gentry that are learned, studious and pious, and an honour and blessing to this unworthy land ; or else it were not like to be so well with us as it is. But O how numerous are the sensual and profane ! which provoked that heavenly poet, of noble extract (Mr. G. Herbert, “ Church Porch,”) to say,

“ O England, full of sin, but most of sloth,
 Spit out thy phlegm, and fill thy breast with glory :
 Thy gentry bleats, as if thy native cloth
 Transfus'd a sheepishness into thy story :
 Not that they all are so ; but that the most
 Are gone to grass, and in the pasture lost.”

Gentlemen, I have no mind to dishonour you ; but compassion on your souls, and on the nation, commands me to complain, in order to reform you : and yet if you sinned and perished alone, we were the less inexcusable if we let you alone. What abundance of you are fitter to swill in a buttery, or gorge yourselves at a feast, or ride over poor men's

corn in hawking and hunting, than to govern the commonwealth, and by judgment and example to lead the people in the ways of life! What abundance of you waste your precious hours in feasting, and sports, and idleness, and complimenting, and things impertinent to your great business in the world, as if you had no greater things to mind! Had you been by another commanded to a dung-cart, or like a carrier to follow pack-horses (in honester and more honourable life than yours), you would think yourselves enslaved and dishonoured: and yet when God hath set before you an eternal glory, you debase your own souls by wilful drenching them in the pleasures, and cares, and vanities of the world, and have no mind of that high and noble work, which God appointed you. So that when many poor men are ennobled by a heavenly disposition, and a heavenly conversation, you enslave yourselves to that which they tread under feet, and refuse the only noble life: that which they account as loss, and dross, and dung, that they may win Christ, and be found in him, (Phil. iii. 7, 8.) that do you delight in, and live upon as your treasure. When once you know whether God or your money be better, whether heaven or earth, whether eternity or time be better, you will then know which is the noblest life.

Nay, what abundance are there among you, that make a very trade of sensuality, and turn your sumptuous houses into sties, and your gorgeous apparel into handsome trappings, if the appurtenances may receive their names from the possessors; that never knew what it was to spend one day or hour of your lives, in a diligent search of your hearts and ways, and heart-breaking lamentation of your sin and misery, and in serious thoughts of the life to come; but go on from feast to feast, and company to company, and from one pleasure to another, as if you must never hear of this again; and as if you were so drunken and besotted with the world, that you had forgotten that you are men, or that you have a God to please, and a soul to save or lose for ever. Nay, how many of you hate a faithful preacher and a holy life, and make them the ordinary matter of your scorn; and cheat your souls with a few ceremonies and formalities, as if by such a carnal righteousness you could make all whole, when you have lived to the flesh, and loathed the spiritual worship of God that is a Spirit, and the heavenly lives of

his sanctified ones, and consequently the law that commandeth such a life, and the God that is the maker of that law. I call not your civil controversies your malignity; but it is the proper title of your enmity to holiness: and is it not enough that man in honour will be without understanding, and make himself like the beasts that perish, (Psal. xlix. 20.) but you must also take up the serpentine nature, and hissing and stinging must be the requital that you return to Christ for all your honours? Think, if you have yet a thinking faculty, whether this be kindly, or honestly, or wisely done, and what it is like to be to yourselves in the end. Your riches and honours do now hide a great deal of your shame; but will it not appear when these rags are torn from your backs, and your souls are left in naked guilt? Saith Chrysostom, 'If it were possible to do justice on the rich as commonly as on the poor, we should have all the prisons filled with them; but riches with their other evils have also this evil, that they save men from the punishment of their evil.' (O but how long will they do so?) This was plain dealing of a holy father; and is it not such as is as needful now as then? Is it not greatness more than innocency that saves abundance of you from shame and punishment?

Nay, many of you think, that because you are rich, it is lawful for you to be idle, and lawful voluptuously to give up yourselves to pleasures and recreations, and you think that you may do with your own as you list: as if it had been given you to gratify the flesh. The words that converted Austin, never sunk yet into your hearts; Rom. xiii. 13, 14. "Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." You never felt the meaning of those words, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

But to turn my Complaint into an Admonition, I beseech you, consider what you are, and what you do. 1. How unlike are you to Jesus Christ your pattern, that denied himself all the honours, and riches, and carnal delights of the world. Read over his life, and read your own, and judge whether any man on earth be more unlike to Christ, than a

voluptuous, worldly gentleman? Especially if malignity be added to his sensuality.

2. How unlike are you to the holy laws of Christ? Are his precepts of mortification and self-denial imprinted in your hearts, and predominant in your lives? Is a beast any more unlike a man, than your hearts and lives are unlike Christ's laws?

3. How unlike are you to the ancient Christians, that forsook all and followed Christ, and lived in a community of charity? And how unlike to every gracious soul, that is dead to the world, and hath mortified his members upon earth, and hath his conversation in another world? Are you not such as Paul wept over; Phil. iii. 18. "Whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things, and that are enemies to the cross of Christ?" though perhaps you are no enemies to his name. Believe it, Gentlemen, whatever your thoughts of yourselves may be, you will find that no religion will save you, that stoopeth to the world, and is but an underling to your fleshly interest.

4. How unlike are you to your professions and your covenant with God? And to your confessions and prayers to him? Did you not renounce the flesh, the world and the devil in your baptism? Do you not still profess that heaven is best, and God is to be preferred, and yet will you not do it, but let your own professions condemn you? Do you not ordinarily confess that the world is vain, and yet will you shew yourselves such dissemblers, as to love and seek it more than God? As if there were no more power in the spirit of Christianity, than in the opinion of Zeno the philosopher, who having oft said that poverty and riches were neither good nor bad, but things indifferent, was yet dismayed when he heard that his farms were seized on by the enemies, the prince having sent one with the report to try him; telling him when he had done, 'That now riches and poverty were not things indifferent.' How oft have you prayed to be saved from temptation? And yet will you still dote upon your snares and fetters; and shew yourselves such hypocrites as to love the temptations which you pray against?

5. You are guilty of a double injury to God; in that you are obliged to him as his created subjects, and yet more obliged by your riches and honours, which he hath given

you for your Master's use ; " To whom men give much, from them will they expect the more ;" Luke xii. 48. For a servant that hath double wages, to abuse you ; for a friend that hath received double kindness, to prove false to you ; for a commander in the army to betray his general, is sure an aggravation of the crime. Must God advance you highest, and will you thrust him lowest in your heart ? Must he feed you with the best, and clothe you with the best, and will you put him off with the worst ? Have you ten times, or a hundred times more wealth from him, than many an honest, heavenly believer ? and yet will you love and serve him less ?

6. Is it not pity and shame, that you should thus turn mercies themselves into sin, and draw your bane from that which might have been a blessing ? Will ye be the worse because God is so good to you ? Must he give you health and time for his service, and give you such plentiful provision and assistance, and will you be worse in health than others are in sickness, and worse in plenty than others are in want ? Is not this the way to dry up the streams of mercy, when the more you have the worse you are ?

7. You exceedingly wrong the church and commonwealth : for it is for the public good that you are advanced ; and you should be a blessing to the land. And will you cast away that time and wealth upon the flesh, which you have received for such noble ends ? Rob not the church and commonwealth of what you owe it, by engrossing it to yourselves, or consuming it on your lusts.

8. Great men have a great account to make : you shall shortly hear, " Give account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward." If God have entrusted you with a thousand pound a year, it is not the same reckoning that must serve your turn, as would serve his turn that had but a hundred. Your improvement must be somewhat answerable to your receivings. Do you need to be told, how sad a reckoning will it then be, to say, ' Lord, I employed most of it in maintaining the pomp and pleasure of myself and family, even that pomp of the world, and those sinful lusts of the flesh, which in my baptism I forswore ; and the rest I left to my children, to maintain them in the same pomp and pleasure, except a few scraps of my revenues, which I gave to the church or poor ?'

9. Your wealth and greatness do afford you great opportunities to do good, and to further the salvation of yourselves and others; and worldliness and sensuality will rob you of these opportunities. O how many good works might you have done, to the honour of your Lord, and the benefit of others and yourselves, if you had made the best of your interest and estates. The loss of the reward will shortly appear to you a greater loss, than that which you now account the loss of your estates.

10. Your worldliness and sensuality is a sin against your own experience and the experience of all the world. You have long tried the world, and what hath it done for you, that you should so overvalue it? You know that it is the common vote of all that ever tried it, sooner or later, that it is vanity and vexation. And have you not the wit or grace to learn from so plain a teacher as experience, yea, your own experience, yea, and all the world's experience?

11. You sin also against your very reason itself, and against your certain knowledge. You know most certainly that the world will serve you but a little while. You know the day is hard at hand when it will turn you off; and you shall say, 'I have now had all that the world can do for me,' Naked you came into it, and naked you must go out of it. '*Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas.*' And then you shall more sensibly know what you now so overvalued, and what you preferred before God and your salvation, than now I am able to make you know. O what low thoughts will every one of you have of all your pomp and pleasure, your vain-glory and all your fleshly accommodations, when you perceive that they are gone, and leave your souls to the justice of that God, whom for the love of them you wilfully neglected. If poor men of mean and low education, were so sottish as not to know these things, methinks it should not be so with you, that are bred to more understanding than they.

12. Lastly, you sin against the most plain and terrible passages of Scripture, seconded with dreadful judgments of God, inflicted either upon yourselves, or at least on others of your rank before your eyes. You have read or heard the words of Christ, (Luke ix. 25.) "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, and be

cast away?" And chap. xii. 33, 34. "Sell all that you have and give alms. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is there will your hearts be also." You have heard there the terrible parable of the rich man, (ver. 16—29.) which endeth with "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" with this general application, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." And you have heard that more dreadful parable (chap. xvi.), of the rich man that was "clothed in purple and fared sumptuously," and what was his endless end. You have heard the difficulty of the salvation of the rich, (chap. xviii. 24, 25.) "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Because they are so hardly kept from loving them inordinately, and trusting in them. You have heard how fully Christ is resolved that no man can be his disciple that forsaketh not all that he hath for him;" chap. xiv. 23, 26, 27. And if you go never so far in your obedience, and yet lack this one thing, to part with all (in affection, and resolution, and practice, when he requireth it), and follow Christ in sufferings and wants, in hope of a treasure in heaven, it is certain that Christ and you must part; Luke xviii. 22. You have heard the terrible passages in James v. 1, 2, &c. and abundance such in the word of God. And yet are you not afraid of worldliness or sensuality? You have seen in England the riches of abundance quickly scattered, that were long in gathering; and God knows how many lost their souls, to build that which a few years' wars pulled down. And yet when you have but a little breathing time, you are at it again as eagerly as ever; as men that knew no greater good, and are acquainted with no better and more gainful an employment.

Gentlemen, Do you know indeed, what it is that you make so great a stir for? which you value at so high a rate? which you hold so fast? which you enjoy so delightfully? You do not know. I dare say by your using of it, that you do not know it. Or else you would soon have other thoughts of it, and use it in another manner. Come nearer, and see it through; and look into the inside. Consult not with

blind and partial sense; but put on awhile the spectacles of faith; go into the sanctuary and see the end. Nay, reason itself may tell you much of it. When you must part with it, you will wish it hanged loose from you, and had not been so glued to you, as to tear your hearts. You feel not what the devil's limetwigs have done, till you are about to take wing, either by a heavenly contemplation, or by death; and then you will find yourselves entangled. The world is like to bad physicians, '*quorum successus sol intuetur, errores autem tellus operit.*' The earth beareth yet all the good it doth you, but hell hath hidden from you the mischief that it hath done to millions of your ancestors: and therefore though this their way was their folly, yet do their posterity approve their sayings; Psal. xix. 13. '*Dic mihi,*' saith Bernard, '*ubi sunt amatores mundi, qui ante pauca tempora nobiscum fuerunt? Nihil ex eis remansit, nisi cineres et vermes. Attende diligenter, qui sunt et fuerunt, sicut tu, comederunt et biberunt, riserunt, duxerunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descenderunt. Hic caro eorum vermibus, illic anima eorum flammis deputatur, donec rursus infelici collegio colligati sempiternis ignibus involvantur.*' Who would so value that which he must eternally complain of, and not only say, '*It hath done me no good,*' but also say, '*It hath deceived me and undone me?*' I would not thank you to make me the owner of all your lands and honours to-day, and take it from me all to-morrow. What the better now are your grandfathers and great grandfathers for living in those houses, and possessing those lands, and honours, and pleasures, that you possess? Unless they used them spiritually and holily for God, and heaven, and the common good, they are now in hell for their sensuality upon earth, and are reaping as they have sown (Gal. vi. 7, 8.), and paying dear for all their pleasures. Their bones and dust do give you no notice of any remnants of their honours or delights; and if you saw their souls, you would be further satisfied. It may be there stands a gilded monument over their rottenness and dust; and it may be they have left an honourable name with those that follow them in their deceit, (and so might the tormented rich man with his brethren (Luke xvi.), who were following him towards that place of torment). A just judgment of

God it is, to give up men that choose deceit, to be thus befooled. That they should not only despise the durable riches, and choose a dream of honour, wealth, and pleasure here; but also, that their end may answer their beginning, they should also take up with a picture of honour and felicity when they are dead. That their deceived posterity may see a gilded image bearing an honourable mention of their names, and hear them named with applause, and so may be allured the more boldly to go after them. And so a shadow of wisdom and virtue, hath a shadow of surviving honour for its reward; which alas, neither soul nor body is the better for. You see that all your wealth and honour will not preserve your honourable corpse from loathsome putrefaction. How much less must it keep your guilty souls, from the place that you have here been purchasing by your mammon?

‘Sic metit Orcus

Grandia cum parvis, non exorabilis auro?’

If this be your wealth, and honour, and delight, the Lord deliver me from such a felicity——

‘Hæc alii capiant; liceat mihi paupere cultu

Securo, charo numine posse frui.’

For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained (or scraped together, as the Hebrew may be turned) when God shall take (or pull) away his soul?” Job xxvii. 8. “The triumphing (or praise) of the wicked is short (or but at hand), and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment;” Job xx. 5.

Yea, one would think that the very troubles and smart that in this life accompanieth your wealth and honour, in the getting and keeping, and the gripes of conscience, that the forethoughts of the parting hour, and your heavy reckoning, must needs mix with all your pleasure and vainglory, unless you have laid asleep your wits; besides your experience of the emptiness and deceit of all that you have overvalued. I say, one would think that this much should somewhat allay your thirst, and calm your minds, and make you think of a better treasure. Sure I am that God would do ten thousandfold more for you, and be better to you; and yet because of some fleshly arguments, you are turned away from him. He cannot be thus loved and delighted in,

and sought, and yet he offereth more for you than the world doth. Saith Augustine, 'Ecce mundus turbat, et amatur; quid si tranquillus esset? formoso quomodo hæreret, qui sic amplecteris fœdum. Flores ejus quomodo colligeret, qui spinis non revocas manum?' And it is just that they should have a bed of thorns, that wilfully make choice of it. Seneca thus justifieth God, that though he give men such perplexities and vexations, it is 'nullis nisi optantibus,' only to them that will needs have it so, and are choosers of their own destruction. Choosers, do I say? Yea, and will compass sea and land for it. Stretch conscience for it till it tear, or can stretch no further. Oppress and defraud for it, some of them. Break vows and covenants for it. Sell God and heaven for it. Scrambling with such distracted violence for the smoky honours, the nominal wealth, the intoxicating pleasures of a few hasty days, that they care not what they part with for them, nor who they bear down that standeth in their way.

'Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames?'

And is Christ worth no more than to be sold with Judas for so base a price? Is our heavenly birthright a thing so base, or the promise of our immortal crown so uncertain, as to be parted with on Esau's terms? Is God and endless glory worth no more than this comes to? 'Propter nummos Deum contemnere,' saith Jerome. To despise and cast off God for a thing so base, is the basest kind of despising him. The idolaters that vilified him by making images of him, were asked, "To whom will you liken me, saith the Holy One;" Isa. xl. 18.25. And these sensual and covetous idolaters must be asked, Whom will you match with God, or set up against him, or prefer before him? What will you choose, if you choose not him? What shall be your portion instead of heaven? Doth it excuse you that the world hath so lovely an aspect? Yes, if God be not more amiable than it, and if his face and favour be not more desirable. Doth it excuse you that the baits of the world are pleasant, and that it offered you fair? Yes, if God had not outbid it, and offered you ten thousand times more. Doth it excuse you that the world is near and certain, and heaven uncertain or out of sight? Yes, if you

are beasts that have no reason to know what will be, but only sense to feel what is; or if God have not given you an infallible promise, befriended by reason, sealed by multitudes of uncontrolled miracles, and transcribed on his servant's hearts; and if the greatness of the glory promised were not sufficient to do more at a distance with a man of faith and reason, than childish trifles near at hand; as the sun at a distance giveth us more light than a glowworm that is hard by. Yea, and if the world, which you think so certain, were not certainly transitory and vain; so that he that gets it, is certain shortly to be no gainer: and he that loseth it, to be no loser. You look on a poor, praying self-denying believer: but you look not before you, on a saint that shall reign with Christ, "and judge the world, when he cometh to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" 2 Thess. i. 10. You see them "sow their seed in tears," but you see it not springing up, nor do you foresee the joyful harvest. You see them following Christ through tribulations, bearing his cross, and despising the shame; but you see them not yet set down with him on their thrones. The fight you see, but the triumph you see not. You see them tossed at sea, but you know not how sure a pilot they have; nor do you see the riches of their freight. You see sickness or persecution unpinning their corruptible rags, and death undressing them, but you see not the clothes which they are putting on. You see them laid asleep by death; but you see not their awaking; nor the rising of their sun, when "the righteous shall have dominion in the morning." The man that is dead to the world you see; but you see not the life that is hid with Christ in God, nor their appearing with him in glory, when Christ who is their life appears. Your unbelieving souls imagine there will be no May or harvest, because it is now winter with us. You think the rose and beauteous flowers which are promised us in that spring, are but delusions, because you know not the virtue of that life that is in the root, nor the powerful influence of that Sun of the believers. You see the dead body, but you see not the soul alive with Christ, retired into its root. You see the candle put out, and know not whither the flame is gone, and think not how small a touch of the yet living soul will light it again.

And so on the other side, you look on the swaggering

gallant, but you look not on the ulcerous soul : You hear them laughing and jesting in their joviality, but you hear them not yet groaning in their pains : You see them clambering into the seat of honour, but see them not cast into the grave : You see them run and ride in pomp and pleasure, following the delights of the flesh, attended by their followers that honour and applaud them ; but you see them not yet gasping under the pangs of death, nor laid in the dust as still as stones : You see their beauty and glittering attire, but you see not the pale and ghastly face that death will give them, nor the skulls that are stripped of all those ornaments : You smell their perfumes, but you smell not their putrefaction : You see their lands and spacious houses and sumptuous furniture ; but you see not how narrow a room will serve them in the grave, nor how little there they differ from the most contemptible of men. Nay more, you see them with Ahab going forth to battle, and leaving the prophets with their bread and water of affliction ; but you see them not yet returning with the mortal blow : You see them in their honours and abundance, but you see them not on Christ's left hand in judgment : You see them clothed richly, and faring deliciously every day ; but you see them not in hell torments, wishing in vain for a drop of water to abate their flames : You hear them honoured, and hear their words of pride and ostentation ; but you hear them not yet crying out of their folly, and bewailing their loss of present time, and lamenting in vain the unhappy choice that now they make. Sirs, believe it, future things are as sure as present. These things are no fables because they are not visible yet. You see not God, and yet he is the principal intelligible object. You see not your own intellectual souls, and yet you know you have them, by the intellection of other things. You see not your own eyesight, and yet you know that an eyesight you have, by the seeing of other things. If there were not an invisible God, there would have been no visible creatures. Visibles are more vile, and are for invisibles that are more noble. Our visible bodies, are for our invisible souls. This visible life is the womb of our everlasting life that is invisible : we are hatched by the Spirit in this shell, till we are ready to pass forth into that glorious light that here we see not. I beseech you, gentlemen, awake, and be not so lamentably deceived, as to think that your ho-

nourable, pleasant dreams are the only realities. O no! it is the last awakening hour that will shew you the now inconceivable realities. You are now but as in jest in your pomp and pleasure; but you shall then be in good sadness in your pains and loss, if sanctifying grace do not prevent it, by putting you out of your jesting vein, and making you in good sadness to be men of real faith and holiness, and lay about you for the real joys. Believe it, sirs, the life of Christianity is not a bare opinion. It is a living by faith upon a life invisible: and so serious resolving a belief of the truth of the everlasting blessedness (as purchased and given by Jesus Christ to persevering saints) as effectually turneth the affections and endeavours of the man to the loving, and seeking it above all this world. It is one thing to take God and heaven for your portion, as believers do; and another thing to be desirous of it as a reserve, when you can keep the world no longer. It is one thing to submit to heaven, as a lesser evil than hell; and another thing to desire it as a greater good than earth. It is one thing to lay up your treasures and hopes in heaven, and to seek it first; and another thing to be contented with it in your necessity, and to seek the world before it, and give God that the flesh can spare. Thus differeth the religion of serious Christians, and of carnal, worldly hypocrites. But I shall break off my Admonition, and end with some Advice.

Direct. 1. 'Look upon this world, and all things in it, with the foreseeing eye of faith and reason, and value it but as it deserves:'. And then you will neither be eager after it, nor too much delighted in it, nor puffed up by it, nor will it so prevalently entice you to venture or neglect eternal things. Did you know and well consider but what an empty, fading thing it is, you could never be satisfied with so poor a portion, nor quiet your souls till you had assurance or sound hopes of better things. Nor would you take such pleasure in childish trifles; nor debase yourselves, to be so inordinately employed about such low and sordid matters, while God and your eternal happiness are laid by. You take not yourselves for the basest of men, much less for brutes or idiots. O then do not make yourselves the basest, and do not unman yourselves, and brutify your immortal souls. A heathen could say, 'Nemo alius est Deo dignus, nisi qui opes contempsit.' If you would be rich, choose that

which will make you rich indeed. Make sure of his favour that is the absolute Lord of all, and then you can want nothing, whatever you may be without. And if yet you thirst for worldly riches, or inordinately love them, and tenaciously keep them from your Master's use, remember that this discovereth your disease; and therefore should mind you rather to cure it than to feed it. It is not money, nor any thing in this world, that will cure such an empty, depraved soul. As Seneca saith, 'If a sick man be carried about, whether in a bed of gold, or a bed of wood, his disease is carried with him.' It is not a golden bed that will cure a diseased man. Nor is it all the gold or honour in the world that will help such a deluded soul, as thinks this world will make him happy. Get but the cure of your carnal minds, and a little will serve you. For it is your sinful fancy that would have much, and not your nature that needs much. Saith Seneca, 'Si ad naturam vives, nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam eris dives. Exiguum natura desiderat; opinio immensum.' He is not the poor man that hath but little, but he that would have more. Nor is he the rich man that hath much, but he that is content with what he hath. If you pray but for your daily bread, be not such hypocrites as by the bent of your desires to cross your prayers. The nearest way to riches, saith the moralist, is the contempt of riches; and saith the Christian, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised all that love him; James ii. 5. The greatest riches are got (proportionably) on the easiest terms. Loving the world will not procure it; but loving God will procure the everlasting fruition of his love. Millions love the world that miss of it; but no man misseth of God that loveth him above the world. Buy not these gawds then at a dearer rate than you may have the kingdom. If you have not enough, make sure of heaven, and that will be enough for you. And get a cure for your diseased minds, which is easier and more profitable than to fulfil them. "No man (saith Seneca) can have all the world; but he may have a mind that can condemn all the world." No man can have all that he will; but he may be content to be without it. The disease is within you, and there must be the cure.

Direct. 2. 'Be sure to fix with a serious faith upon the invisible glory as your portion; and then look at all things

in this world, as good or bad, as they respect your end ; and judge of them as they help or hinder you in the main.' Nothing but a truly heavenly mind is the saving cure of an earthly mind. No man will rightly let go earth, till he have the powerful light that hath shewed him the greater good, and given him a taste of the world to come. Had you not been strangers to God and heaven (in heart, whatever you were in tongue and fancy), you could never have fallen in love with earth. None are so much disposed to travel into other countries, as they that are fallen out with their own. Remember that you have not one penny or pennyworth in the world, but what you had from God, and must be accountable to God for ; and must employ with an eye upon his will, and your salvation. I do not call you to cast away your riches, but to see that you use all that ever you have, as will be most comfortable to you in your last review. I know, as Seneca saith, 'He is a wise man that can make use of earthen vessels, as if they were all silver ; and he is wise too, that can make use of silver vessels, as if they were but earth.' 'Infirmi est animi pati non posse divitias :' but it is one thing to bear riches, and use them for God, and another thing to enjoy them with delight. I neither take the monastics to be the only or the highest in perfection ; nor yet do I condemn necessitated retirements. For I know it is hard to most to converse with God in tumults, and to hear the still voice of his Spirit, in the murmuring noise of a crowd. I know that the commons are usually more barren and fruitless than inclosures ; and that the fruit-tree that groweth by the highway side, shall have many a stone and cudgel thrown at it, which those that are in your orchard escape. But still look to your end, and secure the main. Dream not that you have any full propriety. Remember that you are God's stewards ; set therefore your Master's name, and not your own, upon every pennyworth you possess : let "Holiness to the Lord" be written upon all. Possess nothing but what is devoted to him, to be used as he would have you. Put him not off with scraps and leavings, that gave you all. So much as you save from him, you lose, and worse than lose ; and so much as you lose for him, and surrender to him, and improve for him, you save, and more than save. For "godliness with contentment is great gain." And he that is "faithful in a little, shall be

made ruler over much." It is thus that all things are sanctified with the saints.

Direct. 3. 'Think not that your riches are given you to fulfil the least inordinate desire of the flesh; or that you may take ever the more sensual ease or pleasure, if you had all the world:' but remember that better wages obligeth you to more work: and therefore rise as early, and labour as hard in your own employment, (the more for the common good the better,) yea, and deny your flesh as much as if you had but food and raiment. If you have much, give the more, and use the more, but enjoy never the more; and let not your sensual desires find ever the more provision. A rich man that is wise, and a faithful steward, may live in as much self-denial, and labour as hard, and humble his flesh as much, as he that hath but his daily bread. God sent you not in provision for his enemy. All that is made the food of sin, or that doth not help you up to God, is employed contrary to the end that you received it for.

Direct. 4. 'Be sure that you deal with the world as a deceiver:' be very suspicious of all your riches, and honours, and delights. Feed not on these luscious summer-fruits too boldly, or without fear. Remember how many millions the world hath deceived before you. None come to hell but those that are cheated thither by the flesh and the world. With what exceeding vigilancy then have you need to deal with such a dangerous deceiver; when all your happiness, and all your hopes, are at the stake? and if you be deceived, you are undone. Its force is nothing so perilous as its fraud.

————— 'Ubi vincere aperte
Non datur, insidias armaque, tecta parat.'

They that have to do with such a cheater, in a case of such everlasting consequence, should be suspicious of every thing, and trust the world as little as is possible, when, 'Qui cavet ne decipiatur, vix cavet, cum etiam cavet.'

'Et cum cavisce ratus est, sæpè is cautor captus est,' (ut Plaut.)

As Bucholcer was wont to say when his friends extolled him, 'terreri se etiam laudationibus illis, ut fulminibus;' so should you possess your honours and riches in the world,

And as the same Bucholcer said to Hubner, when he went to be a courtier; ‘*Fidem diabolorum tibi commendo: credere et contremiscere: viz. promissionibus aulicis credere, sed caute, sed timide:*’ so should you be affected to the world. Trust and tremble: or rather trust it not at all. Nay, have you not been deceived by it already? And will you be more foolish than the silly fish, that will scarcely take the hook that he was once pricked by; or than the silly fowls that will be afraid of the net that once they have escaped from, and of the kite that once hath had them in her claws? ‘*Tranquillas etiam naufragus horret aquas.*’ Nay, at the present, if you take any heed of your souls, you may easily perceive what a clog the world is: we are commonly better when we have least of it, or are leaving it, than when we have it at our will. A man may see the utmost visible part of the earth, and the horizon at once: but if he look on the earth that is near him, he cannot see the heavens at that time, much less the zenith. Our own riches, our present riches, our nearest and dearest temporal good, is the greatest averter of the mind from heaven. We are commonly like Antigonus’s sick soldier, that fought well because he looked to die; but grew a coward as soon as he was cured. So that most of us have need of the counsel which the bishop of Colen gave the emperor Sigismund that asked him, “What he should do to be happy?” “Live,” saith he, “as you promised to do, when you were last sick of the stone and gout.” Even the most notorious sinners seem saints when they see the world is leaving them. And doth not common reason tell us, that that which will so move us then, should prevail with us as much as before, when we are certain all our lifetime that this parting time will come? Indeed the creature, as it is annexed unto God, and subservient to him, may have an answerable trust and love: the smallest twig that is fast to the tree, may help you out of the water, if you lay hold of it; but if it be broken from the tree, it will deceive you, though you hold it never so fast. O therefore look for surer footing: a handful of water will not save you from being drowned. Build on the Rock of Ages, that never faileth them that trust him; though yet the blind unbelieving world be more distrustful of him, than of that which they have tried is not to be trusted. A wise man should know him to be trusty, that he trusteth in a case

that concerneth his salvation. And true believers, and none but they, may say with Paul, "I know in whom I have trusted;" 1 Tim. i. 12.

Direct. 5. 'Let it be your daily care to keep clear accounts between God and you, of your receivings and disbursements.' It is time to bewail the expence of that, if it be but a groat, that you cannot give a comfortable account of. Whenever you have several ways before you for the laying out of your money or your time, let the question be seriously put to your heart, Which of these ways shall I wish at death and judgment that I had expended it in? And let that be chosen as the way.

Direct. 6. 'Be sure to watch those thieves that would rob you of your Master's talents, that should be employed for his use.' And will you give me leave to be plain with you in instancing in a few of them.

1. How many ungodly gentlemen do waste that in a thing they call great housekeeping, (that is, the inordinate provisions for the flesh, and a freedom for men to play the gluttons or drunkards in their houses,) which might have been expended to their greater honour and commodity!

2. How many be there that spend that in unnecessary feasting of their friends, that might have been far more advantageously improved!

3. How many be there that spend more in the excess of one or two or three suits of apparel, than would have sufficed to the relief of a distressed family for a twelvemonth's space!

4. How many be there that lay out more in needless buildings, walks, and gardens, than would save the lives of a hundred or a thousand of the poor that perish by hunger, (or by diseases bred by want!) They will not spare from their own superfluities, to supply the necessities of their brethren. Is this loving their neighbours as themselves, and doing as they would be done by?

5. How many be there that spend more needlessly on horses, dogs, or hawks, and cast away more at one game at dice, or at a cock-fight, or a horse-race, than would keep a poor scholar at the university! (But I hope the parliament hath cured this.)

6. But the principal and least lamented abuse of riches, is children's excessive portions; for children are as a sur-

viving self. Men think themselves but half dead, while their children live: and therefore as self is that idol of the wicked, to whom all the creatures of God are sacrificed, so they employ all one way or other for themselves as long as they live, and then leave it when they die, to themselves in their posterity. When they have, like unfaithful stewards, detained God's due from him as long as they live, they leave it to their children to detain it after them. Mistake me not; I persuade you not to be unnatural. Your children must be provided for, if you be not worse than infidels. But I tell you by what rules I should proceed, were it my case. (1.) If I had never such ungodly children, I should provide for them, if I could, their daily bread, and leave them enough for food and raiment, unless they were such as ought not to live, or be maintained. (2.) If I had better children, that were likely to use what they had for God, I should leave them all that could be spared from more necessary uses, that their lives might be more free from care, and they might be serviceable to God with their wealth, when I am dead. And the more confident I were that they would be faithful stewards of it, the more I should commit to their trust. (3.) I should not take it to be my duty to level my posterity with the poorer sort, unless some special call of God, or extraordinary public exigence did require it. So much for the affirmative, what I should do for them. But for the negative, what I should not do for them. (1.) I should think that in a case of some extraordinary necessities to the church or commonwealth, I were bound to alienate all from my posterity, at least, except their food and raiment. (2.) I should still in the general conclude that all must be for God, as he is the owner of me and all; and therefore I should inquire which way it is his will that I should dispose of it. And where my conscience tells me he would have me use it, I should do it, though to the denial of myself or posterity. (3.) I should always prefer the public good of church or commonwealth, before the personal wealth of my posterity, and therefore should provide for them in a subserviency to the greater good, and not prefer their wealth before it. (4.) I should think myself bound to expend all that I had, in that way as might most promote the principal interest of my Lord, unless in cases where he had tied me by any special obligation to a more private expenditure of it. (5.) I should

judge that the ordinary necessities of the church and poor are so great, as should command me very much to abate of full provisions for my posterity. And for the proportion, I should labour to discern, whether the times were such, and my posterity such, as that the stock of my estate would be more serviceable to God in their hands, or otherwise laid out. For the times and quality of children may make a great alteration in the case. (6.) Had I an only son that was notoriously ungodly, I would leave him no more than food and raiment, if I had ten thousand pounds a year, but would give it to God for the works in which I might promote his interest. My reasons are many, which I have touched upon in another discourse. As, 1. Such as forfeit their very daily bread, should not have any more than their daily bread. But such notorious wicked ones forfeit their daily bread. "He that will not labour," saith Paul, "let him not eat," 2 Thess. iii. much more in such greater cases. 2. According to God's ancient law, Deut. xxi. they forfeit their lives, and the parents there were to cause them to be put to death, that were obstinately unreformed. And is the case so altered think you now, as that you are bound to make such children rich, that parents then were bound to put to death? 3. I am not bound to give unnecessary provisions to an enemy of God, to misemploy them, and strengthen him to do mischief, and be more able to oppress God's servants, or oppose his truth, or serve the devil.

I forbear to mention the proportion of men's estates that I think they are ordinarily bound to alienate, but shall leave you to prudence and the general rules, lest I seem to you to go beyond my line. But in general I must say that it is a selfish and an heinous error, to think that men should lay up all that they can gather for their posterity, and all to leave them rich and honourable, and put off God, and all charitable uses, with the crumbs that fall from their tables, or with some inconsiderable driblets. If the rich man in Luke xviii. might have followed Christ on such terms as these, he would hardly have gone sorrowfully from him.

1. By this men shew that they prefer their children before God. 2. And that they prefer them before the church, and Gospel, and the commonwealth: when an heroic heathen would have confessed that his estate and children, and his life were not too good to be sacrificed to his country, as

the case of the Decii and many other Romans, that gave their lives for their country witnesseth. 3. These men prefer the worldly riches of their children before the souls of men: when they have so many calls to employ their wealth to the furthering of men's salvation, and put by all, that their children may be rich. 4. They prefer their children's riches before their own everlasting good: or else they would not deny themselves the reward of a holy improvement of their talents, and cast themselves upon the terrible sentence that is past upon unprofitable servants, and all to leave their children wealthy. 5. They prefer the bodily prosperity of their children before their spiritual; or else they would not be so eager to leave them that riches, which Christ hath told them is such a snare and hindrance to men's salvation. 6. They would teach all the world the easy art of never doing good in life or in death. For if all must follow their principles, then the parents must keep almost all for their children, and the children must do the like by their children, and so it must run on to all generations, that their posterity may be kept as rich as their predecessors. 7. How unlike is this to the ancient saints; and how unlike to the general precepts of self-denial, and doing good to all while we have time, &c. which Christ hath left us in the Gospel. Enable your children to be serviceable in the church and commonwealth, as far as you may; but prefer them not before the church or commonwealth. Wrong not God, nor your own souls, nor the souls or bodies of other men, to procure your children to be rich. It will not ease your pains in hell, to think that you have left your children rich on earth. It is few of the great and noble that are called. They will have an easier way to heaven in a mean estate. Their nurse's milk contented them when first they lived in the world; and will nothing but lands, and lordships, and superlative matters now content them, when they have a shorter time to use it? Poor men can sing as merrily as the rich, and sleep as quietly, and live as comfortably, and die as easily: 'cantabit vacuus,'—they are free from abundance of your cares and fears. The philosopher that had received a great gift of gold from a prince, sent it back to him the next morning and told him that he loved no such gifts as would not let him take his sleep, (for thinking what to do with it).

Direct. 7. Lastly, 'Study the art of doing good, and

making yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you go hence you may be received into the everlasting habitations.' Remember how much of your religion doth consist in the devoting of yourselves and all to God, and improving his stock, and being rich in good works, ready to distribute and communicate; 1 Tim. vi. 18. And how much will be laid upon this at judgment; Matt. xxv. God doth not call upon you for your charity, as if he would be beholden to you, or needed any thing that you can give him; but because he will thus difference his hearty followers from complimenting hypocrites. The poor you shall have always with you; and the church shall always want your help, and Christ will be still distressed in his members, to try the reality of men's professions, whether they love him above all, or else dissemble with him, and whether they have any thing that they think too good for him. It is a certain mark of a hypocrite, to have any thing in this world so dear to you, that you cannot spare it for Christ.

Remember then that it is your own concernment; if you would be ever the better for all your wealth, nay, if you would not be undone by it, study how you may be most serviceable to God with it. Cicero could say, 'that to be rich is not to possess much, but to use much.' And Seneca could rebuke them that so study to increase their wealth, that they forget to use it. If really you be Christians, heaven is your portion and your end: and if so, you can love nothing else, nor use any thing else, rationally, but as a means to attain that end. See, therefore, in all your expenses, how you attain or promote your end. Alas, men are so busily building in their way, that they shew us that they take not themselves for travellers; they are so familiar with the world, that they shew us they are not strangers, but at home. They make their garments so fine, and lay such mountains on their backs, that we see they mean not to be serious runners in the Christian race. The thorny cares that choke Christ's seed, do shew that they are barren, and nigh to burning. If you gather riches for yourselves (Luke xii. 21.), you are standing pits: if you are rich to God, you will be running springs, or cisterns. There is a blessed art of sending all your riches to heaven before you, if you could learn it, and were willing to be happy at those rates. It is not for your

riches that God will either condemn or save you ; but for the abusing or improving them. Though Lazarus was a beggar, yet Abraham had been rich whose bosom he was in. ' Rich men must know (saith Ambrose,) that the fault is not in riches, but in them that know not how to use them.' ' Nam divitiæ ut impedimenta sunt improbis, ita bonis sunt adjumenta virtutum.' O that you could but be sensible of the difference, betwixt them that can say at last, ' We have used our stock for the service of our Lord : we studied his will and interest, and accordingly employed all that we had in the world ;' and them that must say, ' We gave now and then an alms to the poor ; but for the substance of our estates, we spent it carnally for our flesh, to bear up our pomp and greatness in the world, and then we left it to our children to do the like when we were dead ?' There is as wide a difference between the end of these two ways, as there is betwixt heaven and hell ; and surely the way is connected to the end. Think not either that you can serve God and mammon, or that you may live to the world, and die to God. When one was asked whether he had rather be Cræsus or Socrates, he answered, that he had rather be Cræsus while he lived, and Socrates when he came to die ; but dream not you of such a choice. " Be not deceived ; God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap : if you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you shall reap corruption ; but if you sow to the Spirit, of the Spirit you shall reap everlasting life ;" Gal. vi. 7, 8.

And this much more let me add, that if you intend your wealth for God, you must not think of evil getting it ; for God will not accept a sacrifice that is got by falsehood, rapine or injustice. Nay, if you intended it indeed for God, you would not dare to procure it by sin. For God needeth not fraud, perfidiousness or injustice to promote his service. ' Pietas sua federa servat. As Austin saith, ' Ream linguam non facit, nisi rea mens : ' So I say here. Your mind is first guilty of denying God, whatever you pretend, when you dare thus by your deeds deny him.

Yea, let me add, that so far should you be from yielding to any temptation to be covetous, for God, for your family, or any good end that may be offered you, that you should make an advantage of such temptations, to watch the world and your deceitful hearts the more narrowly hereafter. And

if in all temptations to worldliness, you could turn them to a gain and duty, and overshoot the tempter in his bow, it were a point of singular zeal and prudence. When he would put any covetous motion into your mind, or work it into your hands, give then more liberally, or do more good than you did before. Let this be all that the deceitful flesh and world shall get by you. ‘Fallite fallentes.— Et in laqueos, quos posuere, cadant.’

I know that flesh and blood will stand in your way with abundance of dissuasives, and make you believe that this so plain and great a duty, is no duty. In the verbal part of godliness, it would allow God but little; but in the more costly, practical part, much less. Sometimes it will tell you that men are so naught, that they deserve not your charity; but Christ deserveth it; give it therefore to him. Sometimes it will tell you of men’s unthankfulness; but ‘satis est dedisse;’ you have done your duty; God accepteth it: other men’s thankfulness is not your reward. You are more unthankful yourselves to God. You are called to imitate him that causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust, and that daily bestoweth his mercies on the unthankful. Sometimes it will tell you of the uncertainty of reaching the end of your charity: that if you maintain scholars to learning, they may prove ungodly: if you leave any considerable gift to pious uses, sacrilegious and rapacious hands may alienate it. But you are sure of succeeding in your ultimate end, which is the pleasing of God, and your own salvation. It is not loss to you, if it be to others. Cast your bread upon the waters; if you cannot trust God, you cannot obey him. Do your part, and leave his part to himself. It is your part to give, and it is God’s part to succeed it for the attainment of the end. He that is worst is most like to fail. And whether think you is better, God or you? and which should be more suspected? He is unworthy the name of a servant of God, that will run no hazard for him. Venture your charity in a way of duty, or pretend not to be charitable. Will you not sow your master’s corn, till you are certain of a plenteous increase? And do you think that he will take this for a good account? This is the foolish excuse that Christ hath told you shall have a

terrible sentence: you will hide God's talent, for fear of losing it; but woe to such unprofitable servants.

Sometimes the flesh will tell you that you may want yourselves, or your posterity at least; and that you were best gather till your stock arise to so much, or so much, and then God shall have some. A fair bargain! Just like ungodly men by their repentance and conversion; they will sin till they are old, and then they will turn. But few turn that delay with such resolutions. If God hath not right to all, he hath right to none. If he hath right to all, will you give him none but your leavings? A swine will let another eat when his belly is full. What if you are never richer, will you never do good therefore with what you have?

And for the impoverishing of yourself, if you fear being a loser by God, you may keep your riches as long as you can, and try how you can save yourself and them. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance that he possesseth. Do not imagine that you need more than you do. If monastics think it their perfection to be wilfully poor, and Seneca thought it the Cynic's wisdom, '*quod effecit nequid sibi eripi posset;*' you may much more rejoice in such an estate, if God bring you to it by and for welldoing. You live in dangerous times: wars and thieves may soon level your estates; can there be greater wisdom than to send it all to heaven, and lay it up with God, and put it into the surest hands, and put it to the only usury? '*Aut ego fallor, aut regnum est, inter avaros, circumscriptores, latrones, plagiarios, unum esse, cui noceri non possit.*' Cannot a man live, think you, without wealth and honour? '*Siquis de talium felicitate dubitat, potest idem dubitare, et de deorum immortalium statu, an parum beate degant, quod illis non prædia, nec horti sint,*' &c: Sen. As it is the honour of God, the first Mover, '*omnia movere ipse non motus;*' so it is the honour of the greatest benefactors, '*omnia dare nihil habentes:*' he that hath it to give, hath it more transcendently, than he that hath it but to use. He that hath most, hath most care, and trouble, and envy, and danger, and the greatest reckoning. Neither poverty nor riches, was the wise man's wish, but convenient food. '*Optimus pecuniæ modus est, qui nec in paupertatem cadit, nec procul à paupertate discedit.*' Sen. 'No man doth dissemble, lie, oppress, defraud, for

love of poverty; but thousands do it for love of riches.' 'Neminem vidi tyrannidem gerere propter paupertatem, plurimus vero propter divitias,' saith the Cynic, 'citante Stob.' Poverty is one of the cheapest medicines for the mind, and riches a dear deceit. A philosopher calls poverty a self-taught virtue, and riches a vice to be acquired with great labour and diligence. Poverty is a natural philosophy; an effectual doctrine of temperance; and riches a nursery of pride, voluptuousness, and every vice. And Paul comes near it, and speaketh more cautelously, yet home enough, that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" 1 Tim. vi. 10. and therefore is itself a transcendent evil.

Sweet healthful temperance is cheap, and may be maintained without any great revenues: it is killing luxury, excess, and pride that are so dear, and require so much for their maintenance. Our journey is not of such small moment, nor our way so far, nor our day so long, nor our strength and patience so great, as to encourage us to load ourselves with things unnecessary. Christian living is daily fighting; and we use not to fight with our riches on our backs, but for them. He that swimmeth with the greatest load is most likely to sink. Men fancy that evil in a low estate, which else they would not feel; and when they have picked a causeless quarrel with it, and undeservedly fallen out with it, they speak abusively of it, and of God himself for casting it upon them. Men love riches so well, because they love sin so well. Did poverty accommodate men's vices, and feed and satisfy their sinful lusts as well as riches, it would be loved as well. And if riches did starve up luxury and voluptuousness as much as poverty, they would be as much abhorred. Few men speak highly of honours, or riches, or pleasures at the last; nor hardly of a low or suffering state. And the last judgment is commonly the wisest.

Let not therefore the fear of poverty deter you from good works. Yea, rather give speedily, and do good while you have it, before all be gone, and you be disabled. Saith Nazianzen, (Orat. de Amor. Pauper.) 'Deo gratitudinis ergo aliquid tribue, quod ex eorum numero sis, qui de aliis bene mereri possunt, non qui aliorum beneficentia opus habeant: quod in alienas manus non oculos coniectos habeas, sed alii in tuas. Da operam, ut non solum opibus, sed

etiam pietate, non solum auro, sed etiam virtute sis locuples. Cura ut proximo tuo id circo præstantior sis, quia benignior. Fac calamitoso sis Deus, Dei misericordiam imitando. Nihil enim tam divinum homo habet, quam de aliis bene mereri.' If you have no pity on others, have some on your souls. Give not all your lands and wealth to your flesh and your posterity: give some of it to your souls, by giving it to God. Shall your bodies have it, and your souls have none, or but a little? 'Hoc solum quod in opibus bonum est, lucremur; nempe ut animas nostras in eleemosynis acquiramus, facultates nostra pauperibus impertiamus, ut cœlestibus ditemur. Animæ quoque partem da; non carni duntaxat: Deo quoque partem da, non mundo tantum: ex ventre aliquid subtrahe, et spiritui consecra: ex igne aliquid eripe, ac procul, à depascente flamma reconde; à tyranno eripe, ac Domino committe.—Da exiguum ei a quo multa habes: da etiam omnia ei, qui omnia donavit: nunquam Dei munificentiam vinces, etiamsi omnia tua bona projicias, etiamsi te etiam ipsum bonis tuis adjungas. Nam hoc quoque ipsum accipere est, nempe Deo donare;' saith Gregory Nazianzen, ubi sup.

Of any kind of covetousness, there is none more plausibly pretended against works of charity, than that of some ministers, that can spare no money, because their libraries are yet unfurnished with many books which they would fain have. Yet here we must see that greater works be not for this omitted. Saith Seneca (de Tranquil.) 'Studiorum quoque quæ liberalissima impensa est, tamdiu rationem habebo, quamdiu modum. Quo mihi innumerabiles libros et bibliothecas, quorum Dominus vix tota vita sua indices perlegit? Onerat discentem turba, non instruit: multoque satius est paucis te authoribus tradere, quam errare per multos.—Studiosa hæc luxuria; imo ne studiosa quidem, quoniam non in studium, sed in spectaculum.—Paretur librorum quantum satis sit; nihil in apparatus—Vitiosum est, ubique quod nimium est.'

Yea more, let me tell you all, and beseech you to consider it. It is your duty even to pinch your flesh, and spare it from your back and belly, that you may have wherewithal to do good. It is no thanks to you to relieve others out of that which you need not yourselves; and to give God that which your flesh can spare. Such liberality may stand with little suffering or self-denial, and therefore will be but

a poor proof of your grace. Had I ten thousand pounds a year, I should think it my duty for all that, to pinch my flesh, that I might spare as much of it as is possible for God. David would not offer that to God which cost him nothing, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. If you fare the harder, and go the plainer in your attire, and deny yourselves that which is for any needless pomp or ostentation, or splendour in the world, that you may have so much the more to do good with, you deal then like good husbands for God and your souls, and faithful stewards. Why should a covetous miser pinch his flesh more to gather riches for himself and his posterity, than you should do to gather it for God, and to expend it on the church and poor? Be as frugal as they, but not to the same end; so you use it for God and your poor brethren, an honest parsimony and gathering is a duty; and such a holy covetousness is so far from condemnable, that it is the truest charity, which God and all wise men will applaud. I do not mean only to deny your flesh in gross excesses, but to pinch it by a just frugality and abstinence. And yet you shall not say that I am drawing you to extremes. I would not have you so far pinch your flesh as to disable it for duty, but to deny it whatsoever doth not some way help it for duty, that we may not feed our own unnecessary delights, though with a seeming decorum and moderation, while so many about us are pinched with the want of necessaries, and so many public, excellent works are calling for our help. The flesh is to be tamed, and humbled, and brought in subjection, and scanted when greater things require it, but not to be destroyed and made unserviceable. ‘*Infido huic corpori quomodo conjunctus sim, haud equidem scio; quoque pacto simul et imago Dei sim, et cum cœno voluter; quod et cum pulchra valetudine est, bello me lacescit, et cum bello premitur, mœrore me afficit: quod, et ut conservum amo; et ut inimicum odi atque aversor: quod, et ut vinculum fugio, et ut conæres vereor. Si debilitare illud et conficere studeo, jam non habeo quo socio et opitulatore ad res præclarissimas utar; nimirum haud ignorans quam ob causam procreatus sim, quodque me per actiones ad deum ascendere oporteat. Sin contra ut cum socio et adiutore mitius agam, nulla jam ratio occurrit, qua rebellantis impetum fugiam, atque à Deo non excidam, compedibus degrevatus, vel in terram detrahentibus, vel in ea detinentibus.*

Hostis est blandus et placidus : invidiosus amicus. O miram conjunctionem et alienationem ! Quod metuo amplector, quod amo pertimesco. Antequam bellum gesserim in gratiam redeo. Antequam pace fruor, ab eo dissideo.' Greg. Naz. ubi sup. And for delight, at least learn of an heathen how to esteem of it. Sen. de vita beata. 'Tu voluptatem complecteris, ego compesco : tu voluptate fueris, ego utor : tu illam summum bonum putas, ego nec bonum : tu omnia voluptatis causâ facis, ego nihil.'

What remains now, gentlemen, but that you be up and doing, and look about you where you may have the best bargain to lay out your money on, for God and for your souls ? Stay not till the market is over, till thieves have robbed you, till God in judgment have impoverished you ; till mere necessity do constrain you to part with that which you cannot keep ; or till the souls or bodies that need your help are removed from your sight. Seek after an object for your alms, as diligently as beggars seek the alms, you have more cause ; for you get more by giving, than they do by receiving. If you believe not this, you believe not Christ ; and so are infidels.

The sum of my advice is, That as men that are drawing near to their account, and love Christ in his members, and believe the promise of reward, you would devote yourselves and your estates to Christ, and study to do good, and make it your daily trade and business, as men that are " zealous of good works, and created to walk in them," (Tit. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 10.) and not as dropping a little upon the by. Say not that you have not wealth, or interest, or opportunity. The rich have full opportunities : the poor have their two mites or their cup of cold water to give to a disciple. And he that hath neither, may have a will to give thousands a year. And this is our comfort that have but little, that " if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not ;" 2 Cor. viii. 12. But where " there is a readiness to will, there will also be a performance out of that which you have," if you be sincere ; ver. 11. Et nunquam usque eo interclusa sunt omnia, ut nulli actioni honestæ locus sit. Nunquam inutilis est opera civis boni. Auditum enim, visu, vultu, nutu, obstinatione tacita, incessuque ipso prodest. Ut salutaria quædam citra gustum tactumque odore proficiunt ; ita virtus utilitatem etiam ex longinquo et

latens fundit: sive spargitur, et se utitur suo jure; sive precarios habet excessus, cogiturque, vela contrahere; sive otiosa mutaque est, et angusto circumscripta; sive adaper-ta: in quocunque habitu est, prodest. Seneca de Tranq. (I give you not these passages of strangers to Christ, as if his doctrine needed any such patches; but as imagining that the temper of those I speak to, may need such a double testi-mony, and to see the book of nature as well as of grace: and to let you understand, how inexcusable a professed Christian is, that is worse than an infidel.)

I have been long, and yet I would I had done. I have taught you, and yet I fear lest you have not learned. I have told you what you knew before (unless it be because you will not know it) and yet have more need to hear it, than a thousand things that you never knew. I have set you an easy lesson hard to be learned. Were but your senses ra-tional, or were your will but disengaged and morally free, the work were done, and that would be learnt in an hour, that the church and commonwealth might rejoice in till the sun shall be no more. O had we but such princes, nobles, and gentlemen as were thus zealous and studious of good works, and wholly devoted and dedicated unto God, what a resemblance should we have of heaven on earth. How then would our princes and nobles be both loved and honoured, when their addictedness to God did make them so divine? How honourable then would our parliament be, and how cheerfully should we flock together for their election. How dear would our judges and country magistrates be to all that have any thing of piety or humanity in them. "Kings then would reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judg-ment; and a man would be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see should not be dim, and the ears of them that hear should hearken; the heart also of the rash should understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stam-merers should be ready to speak elegantly;" Isa. xxxii. 1—5. What help then should ministers have in their work, and the souls of all the people for their happiness! And what a shaking would satan's kingdom feel. Then neither seducers should have this pretence, nor the seduced this temptation as now they have, to call their various models of

republics by such splendid names, and to think Christ reigns when they reign ; or that it is the only government, to have all to be governors, or to have the greatest liberty to be had. No forms will reform us, and heal our maladies, till we are healed and reformed within. Lead will not be gold, what form soever you mould it into. And though some ways may be more effectual to restrain the evil, and improve the good, that is among them, yet still the wicked will do wickedly. The swordfish and the thresher would be the tormenters of Leviathan, and God himself would be impatient of his tyranny. And his brother would mend the matter, who by giving the power to the vast tumultuous ocean itself, may find that his republic is not only inconsistent with a clergy, (a high commendation) but may possibly be as injurious to his moral honesty, as any other sort of tyranny ; and might have learned of his chiefest master, Seneca, (de Tranquil. Anim.) that the free city of Athens could less endure Socrates than the tyrants, and did put him to death, whom they had tolerated. ‘*Nunquid potes invenire urbem miseriorum quam Atheniensium fuit cum illam triginta tyranni divellerent ? Mille trecentos cives, optimum quemque occiderant. Socrates tamen in medio erat. Et imitari volentibus, magnum circumferebat exemplar, cum inter triginta dominos liber incederet. Hunc tamen Athenæ ipse in carcere occiderunt. Et qui tuto insultaverat agmini tyrannorum, ejus libertatem libera civitas non tulit.*’

Gentlemen, for the Lord’s sake, for your souls’ sake, for the church’s and the Gospel’s sake, for your country’s sake, and the spiritual and corporal good of thousands, awake now from your sloth and selfishness, from your ambition, voluptuousness and sordid worldliness, and give up yourselves and all that you have to God by Christ, and to the common good, and make the best of all your faculties and interest, for the high and noble ends of Christians : and convince all self-conceited founders or troublers of the commonwealth, that you have hit the way of a true reformation, without any alteration of the form, by correcting yourselves, the principal materials. And let them see by your seeking the weal of all, that your form is as truly a commonweal as theirs, and that they absurdly appropriate the title to their own. If you deny us this, on you shall be the blame and shame, and not on our want of a popular form.

But because I have gone so far with you by persuasion, (though yet I doubt whether indeed you will be persuaded) I shall not leave you till I have added the last part of my task, which is to set some Rules and Matter for good works before you, that if you are but willing, you may set your money to the happiest usury, and that upon the best security.

1. (For general rules) Aim at no lower an ultimate end in your charity, than the pleasing of God ; and move from no lower a first moral principle, than the love of God within you. Seek not self, while you seem to deny it. Give and do good to Christ in his servants.

2. Consider therefore of men's relations to Christ, and understand where his interest lieth in the world. Avoid both their extremes, that would have you do good to none but saints, and that would have you do it to all alike. As God hath a special love to his children, and yet doth good to all, his mercy being over all his works ; and as he is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe ; so must you love all men as men, and saints as saints ; and do good to all men, but especially to them of the household of faith ; Gal. vi. 10. The new command of special love, must not be thought to abrogate the old commandment of common love, even of loving our neighbours as ourselves. You must do good to a disciple in the name of a disciple ; and to a prophet in the name of a prophet, (Matt. x. 42.) and yet take the wounded man for your neighbour, that you see lie in your way ; Luke x. 30. I know the serpentine seed had rather you would kick against the pricks, and tread down Christ's interest, than there to lay out your greatest charity. But it is God that you have to reckon with, who judgeth not as they. The philosopher being asked, Why all men were more ready to give to the halt and blind, than to philosophers, answered, That they thought they might come to be halt and blind themselves, but were never like to be philosophers : so I may say of many that would be content that you feed the common poor with bread, but the disciples of Christ with stones. They think they may be poor themselves, but they are never like to be Christ's disciples : nay, some of them (such as Clem. Writer in his mock ' Fides Divina ') will persuade you that it is a sottish thing to conceive that any have Christ's Spirit now, that work not miracles,

and that he hath no church, ministry or saints, that is, that Christianity is not the right religion, unless it had present miracles to warrant it. And then you might be excused rather for your uncharitableness to it, than for your charity. But wisdom is justified of all her children: and the mouths of her enemies shall be quickly stopped; and they shall then know that Christ is Lord and Judge, without either faith or further miracles.

3. When you have two good works before you, prefer the greater, and choose not the less.

4. 'Cæteris paribus,' let works of spiritual and everlasting concernment, be preferred to those that are merely temporal.

5. And let works for the public good, of church or commonwealth, be preferred before private works.

6. Let God have all in one way or other, even that which yourselves and families receive; take it but as your daily bread to support you in his service. Do not limit God, or tie him to any part. Take heed of reserving any thing from him, or of halving with him, as Ananias and Sapphira. He deserveth and he expecteth all. That which he hath not, you have not, but satan hath it. You lose it, if you return it not to him.

And now in the conclusion, I shall presume (though I may incur a censure for it) to give you a catalogue of some of those good works which are seasonable in our days, by which you may make your reckoning comfortable. And do not think that God is beholden to you for it, if you perform them all; but take it as the happiest bargain that you can make; and thankfully take the opportunity while it is offered you, remembering that there is no such security or advantage to be made of your money in any way, as for God; and that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Say not another day but that you had a price in your hands; if you have not a heart, you must suffer with the unfaithful.

A Catalogue of seasonable Good Works, presented to them that are sanctified to God, and dare trust him with their Riches, expecting the everlasting Riches which he hath promised, and are zealous of Good Works, and take it for a precious mercy that they may be exercised therein.

1. Inquire what persons, burdened with children, or sickness, or on any such occasion labour under necessities, and relieve them as you are able and find them fit. And still make advantage of it for the benefit of their souls, instructing, admonishing and exhorting them, as they have need. If you give them any annual gift of clothes, bread or money, engage them to learn some catechism withal, and to go to the minister and give him an account of it. Some I know that set up a monthly lecture to be fitted to the poor, and give sixpence or twelpence to a certain number of poor that hear it.

2. As far as law will enable you, bind all your tenants in their leases to learn a catechism, and read the Scripture, and be once a year at least accountable to the minister of their profiting. If you cannot do this, at least use your interest in every tenant you have, to do it, and to seek God and worship him in their families (in which let your own families be eminently exemplary). It is very much that landlords might do for God if they had hearts. Discountenance the ungodly: encourage the good; give them back some little, when they pay their rent, to hire them to some duty. And think not too much to go to their houses for such ends.

3. Buy some plain and rousing books, that tend to conversion, and are fittest for their condition, and give them to the families that most need them, getting them to promise you to read them twice over at least, and then to give their teachers an account of the effect, and receive instructions from them for their further profit. Many have this way received much good. Or you may buy the books, and trust the ministers to distribute them, and engage the receivers to read them, or hear them read.

4. Take the children of the poor, and set them apprentices to some honest trade, and be sure you choose them godly masters, that may take care of their souls as well as

of their bodies. Or if you are able, settle a perpetual allowance for this use, entrusting the minister with the choice of a godly master for them, and whom you see meet, with the choice of boys.

5. In very great congregations that have but one minister, nor are able and willing to maintain another, it is a very good work to settle some maintenance for an assistant, without whom the flock must needs be much neglected. Improvements may be bought in to that use.

6. To settle schools in the more rude parts of the country, where they use not to teach their children to read, or in market-towns where people are numerous, is a very good work.

7. It is one of the best works I know within the reach of a mean man's purse, to maintain scholars (in sizer's places) at about £10 per annum charge, till they are capable either of the ministry, or of some other station in order to it, where they can maintain themselves. As also to maintain some of the choicest parts for some special studies. There is an intent of some to propound this work in a method fit for the whole nation to concur in. Till that be done, any rich man that is willing to do good, may entrust some able, godly ministers with the choice of the fittest youths (which is the greatest matter) and may allow them necessary maintenance. How many souls may be saved by the ministry of one of these! And how can money be better husbanded?

8. It will be a very good work also, conjunctly to encourage manufactures or other trades, and piety too, if in cities and corporations, some yearly rents being given on these terms; that several of the honestest tradesmen, may have £5 or £10 a piece yearly of this rent, lent them freely for four or five years to trade with, putting in security to repay it: and so the stock will increase, and more land may be bought by it after certain years, to go on to the same use: (only let the trustees have power to remit all, or part, where there is an extraordinary unexpected failing.) And that the fittest men may still receive it, some godly trustees may be chosen who may choose their successors; the minister being one, as likeliest to choose the fittest subjects of this beneficence. If honest men be kept up, they will better relieve the poor, than if it were left to their own hands.

9. It would be a blessed work for our rulers, and some

rich men, to erect a college (at Salop, I think the only fit place, for many reasons) for the education of scholars for the use of Wales; a country, whose present misery, and ancient honour, and readiness to receive the Gospel, and zealous profession of what they know, should encourage all good men to help them. Too few will send their sons to our present Universities, and too few of those that come thither are willing to return. But if this may not be done, the next way will be to add some charitable help for them in Oxford, obliging them to return to the service of their country.

10. Were I to speak to princes, or men so rich and potent as to be able to do so good a work, I would provoke them to do as much as the Jesuits have done, in seeking the conversion of some of the vast nations of infidels, that are possessed of so great a part of the world; viz. To erect a college for those whom the Spirit of God shall animate for so great a work, and to procure one or two of the natives out of the countries whose conversion you design, to teach the students in this college their language (which it is like might be effected). And when they have learned the tongues, to devote themselves to the work; where by the countenance of ambassadors, merchants, plantations or any other means, they may procure access and liberty of speech. Doubtless God would stir up some among us, to venture on the labour and apparent danger, for so great a work. If we be not better principled, disposed and resolved to do or suffer in so good a cause, than the Jesuits are, we are much to blame. And where we can but have opportunity, we are like to do much more good than they. 1. Because they are so importunate everywhere for the interest of the pope, that the people presently smell it to be but a selfish secular design. 2. Because when they have taken them from their heathenish idolatry, and taken down their images, they set up the divine worship of the host, and the cross, and the religious worship of the Virgin Mary, and the saints, with prayers to them in the stead: with such abundance of ceremonious additions, that the people think it is as good to be where they are; as if it were but the taking down one Daimon or Divus, to set up another in a kind of emulation, and they think that every country should continue the worship of their ancient patrons or Daimons. Whereas if we went among thme, with the plain and pure Gospel, not sophisticated by these

superstitions, with a simple intention of their spiritual good, without any designs of advantage to ourselves, it is like we might do much more, and might expect a greater blessing from God; as Mr. Elliot, and his helpers find of their blessed labours in New England, where, if the languages, and remote habitations (or rather no habitations, but dispersions) of the inhabitants did not deny them opportunity of speech, much more might be effected. And though the Mahometans are more cruel than the heathens against any that openly speak against their superstition and deceit, yet God would persuade some, it is like, to think it worth the loss of their lives to make some prudent attempt in some of those vast Tartarian or Indian countries, where Christianity hath had least access and audience. As difficult works as these are, the Christian princes and people are exceedingly to blame, that they have done no more in attempting them, and have not turned their private quarrels, into a common agreement for the good of the poor uncalled world.

I have told you of divers ways in which you may secure your wealth from loss, and make an everlasting advantage of it. Those that have power and not a will, shall lose the reward, and have the condemnation of unfaithful stewards. Those that have power and an envious, evil will, that desireth not the church's good, shall moreover have the punishment of malignant enemies. Those that have neither power nor will, or are both impotent and malignant, shall be judged according to what they would have done, if they had been able. Those that have an unfeigned will, but not power, shall be accounted as if they had done the works; for God accepteth the will for the deed. All these good works are yours, poor Christians, that never did them, if certainly you would have done them, notwithstanding the difficulty, cost and suffering, if you had been able. But it is the godly rich, that are both able and willing, and actually perform them, that will profit both themselves and others, that both their own and other's souls may have the comfort of it. I shall lay some of the words of God himself before your eyes, and heartily pray for the sake of your own souls, and the public good, that you may excel Papists as far in works of charity, as you do in the soundness of doctrine, discipline and worship.

Gentlemen, excuse the necessary freedom of speech, and accept the seasonable, honourable, gainful motion, propounded to you from the word of God, by

Your faithful monitor,

RICHARD BAXTER.

February 20, 1657.

Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem (Prat. spir. c. 195, referente Baronio ad an. 411.) delivereth this history following to posterity, as a most certain thing:

“That Leontius Apamiensis, a most faithful, religious man that had lived many years at Cyrene, assured them that Synesius (who of a philosopher became a bishop) found at Cyrene, one Evagrius a philosopher, who had been his old acquaintance, fellow-student and intimate friend, but an obstinate heathen: and Synesius was earnest with him to become a Christian, but all in vain; yet did still follow him with those arguments that might satisfy him of the Christian verity; and at last the philosopher told him, that to him it seemed but a mere fable and deceit that the Christian religion teacheth men, that this world shall have an end, and that all men shall rise again in these bodies, and their flesh be made immortal and incorruptible, and that they shall so live for ever, and receive the reward of all that they have done in the body; and that he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he that gives to the poor and needy shall have treasure in heaven, and shall receive an hundred-fold from Christ, together with eternal life: these things he derided. Synesius by many arguments assured him that all these things were certainly true: and at last the philosopher and his children were baptized. Awhile after, he comes to Synesius, and brings him three hundred pounds of gold for the poor, and bid him take it, and give him a bill under his hand that Christ should repay it him in another world. Synesius took the money for the poor, and gave him under his hand such a bill as he desired. Not long after, the philo-

sopher being near to death, commanded his sons that when they buried him, they should put Synesius's bill in his hand in the grave, which they did : and the third day after, the philosopher seemed to appear to Synesius in the night, and said to him, 'Come to my sepulchre, where I lie, and take thy bill, for I have received the debt and am satisfied ; which for thy assurance I have subscribed with my own hand.' The bishop knew not that the bill was buried with him, but sent to his sons who told him all ; and taking them and the chief men of the city, he went to the grave, and found the paper in the hands of the corpse, thus subscribed, 'Ego Evagrius philosophus, tibi Sanctissimo Domino Synesio episcopo salutem ; accepi debitum in his literis manu tua conscriptum, satisfactumque mihi est ; et nullum contra te habeo jus propter aurum quod dedi tibi, et per te Christo Deo et Salvatori nostro ;' that is, 'I Evagrius the philosopher, to thee most holy sir, bishop Synesius, greeting : I have received the debt which in this paper is written with thy hands, and I am satisfied ; and I have no law (or action) against thee for the gold which I gave to thee, and by thee to Christ our God and Saviour.' They that saw the thing, admired and glorified God that gave such wonderful evidence of his promises to his servants : and, saith Leontius, this bill subscribed thus by the philosopher, is kept at Cyrene most carefully in the church to this day, to be seen of such as do desire it."

Though we have a sure word of promise, sufficient for us to build our hopes on, yet I thought it not wholly unprofitable, to cite this one history from so credible antiquity, that the works of God may be had in remembrance. Though if any be causelessly incredulous, there are surer arguments that we have ready at hand to convince him by.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ;" Matt. v 7.

Read Matt. vi. 19. to the end of the chapter.

"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven ;" Matt. vii. 21.

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth

them, I will liken him to a wise man that built his house upon a rock," &c. Matt. vii. 24.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" Matt. v. 16.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive;" Acts xx. 35.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and of him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away;" Matt. v. 42.

"All these have I kept from my youth up—yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Luke xviii. 21—24.

Read and consider Luke xii. 15—49. And Luke xvi. 19, to the end.

"So likewise whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple;" Luke xiv. 23. 26—28.

"We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them;" Eph. ii. 10.

"What profiteth it, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" James ii. 14.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Tit. ii. 14.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;" 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

"But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" Heb. xiii. 16.

"I say unto you, make you friends of the mammon of

unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" Luke xvi. 9. 13.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble;" &c. Psal. xli. 1, 2, &c.

Read Deut. xv. 7—9., &c. 2 Cor. ix. 1, 9., &c. Dan. iv. 27. Lev. xxiii. 22. Prov. xxii. 9.

"He that giveth to the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse;" Prov. xxviii. 27.

Read Isaiah lviii. throughout.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted of the world;" James i. 27.

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten: your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days—Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter—" James v. 1—3. 5.

"We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren: but whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth;" 1 John iii. 16—18.

"Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all his goods (or good things). Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap—Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men; especially to them who are of the household of faith;" Gal. vi. 6, 7. 9, 10.

"Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;" Eph. iv. xxviii.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a

righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward;" Matt. x. 41, 42.

Read 1 Cor. ix. 4—16.

"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me—Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me;" Matt. xxv. 40. 45.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly;" Matt. vi. 3, 4.

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none—and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away;" 1 Cor. vii. 29—31.

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no man is free from these things; but ye that are called, should flee from them, as from idols; 1 Cor. x. 14.

Let us therefore not love the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if we love the world, the Father's love is not in us; and he that loveth the world, the Father's wrath is kindled against him; and he that loveth the Father, he loveth his brethren also; 1 John. ii. 15–17.

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Let him that laboureth, as though he laboured for the Lord, and not for men; which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth; Eph. iv. xxviii.

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a

THE CRUCIFYING OF THE WORLD

BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

GALATIANS VI. 14.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

EVER since mankind had a being upon earth, the malicious apostate spirits have been their enemies. If it was the will of our Creator that we should be militaries in our innocency, and keep our standing, and attain our confirmation and glory by a victory, or else come short of it if we lost the day; no wonder that our lapsed condition must be militant, and that by conquest we must obtain the crown. But there is a great deal of difference between these combats. In our first state we were the sole combatants against the enemy ourselves, and we fought in that sufficient strength of our own which was then given us, and by our wilful yielding we were overcome. But since our fall we fight under the banner of another, who having first conquered for us, will afterwards conquer in us and by us. All the great transactions and bustles of the world, which our fathers have reported to us, which have filled all the histories of ages, and which our eyes have seen, or our ears have heard of, are nothing but the various actions or successes of this great war; and all the persons in the world are the soldiers in these two armies, whereof the Lord of life, and the prince of darkness are the generals: the whole inhabited world is the field. The great onset of the enemy was made upon the person of our Lord himself; and as often as he was assaulted or did assault, so oft did he overcome. In the wilder-

ness he had that first appointed conflict with satan himself, hand to hand. Through his whole life after, he was assaulted by the inferior sort of enemies. And a leader in his own army, even Peter himself, is once seduced to become a satan, (Matt. xvi. 22.) and a traitor Judas is the means of his apprehension, and then the blinded Jews and rulers of his crucifixion, and there had he the last and greatest conflict; in which when he seemed conquered he did overcome, and so his personal war was finished. When the Captain of our salvation was thus made perfect through sufferings, (Heb. ii. 10.) that he might bring many sons to glory, his next work was to form his army; which he did, by giving first commission to his officers, and appointing them to gather the common soldiers, and to fill his bands. No sooner did they set themselves upon the work, but satan sendeth forth his bands against them: persecutors assault them openly: and heretics are traitors in their own societies, and make mutinies among the soldiers of Christ, and do them more mischief by perfidiousness, than the rest could do by open hostility. The first sort of them took advantage, 1. By the reputation of Moses' law, and the zeal of the blinded Jews for its defence. And, 2. From the dangers, sufferings and fleshly tenderness of many professors of the Christian faith, which made them too ready to listen to any doctrine that promised them peace and safety in the world: and as they were themselves a carnal generation, that looked after worldly glory and felicity, and could not bear persecution for Christ, and so were enemies to his cross, while they profess themselves to be his disciples, so would they have persuaded the churches to be of the same mind, and to take the same course as they; that so they might not be noted for carnal and cowardly professors themselves, while they brought others to believe the justness of their way; but rather might have matter of glorying in their followers, instead of being either sufferers with the true Christians, or rejected by them whose profession they had undertaken.

These were the persons that Paul had here to deal with, against whom having opposed many arguments through the epistle, in the words of my text he opposeth his own resolution, "God forbid that I should glory," &c.

The words contain Paul's renouncing the carnal disposition and practice of the false apostles, and his professed re-

solution of the contrary. Where you have, 1. The terms of detestation and renunciation, "God forbid," or, "be it far from me." 2. The thing detested and renounced, viz. To glory in any thing save the cross of Christ. His own positive profession containeth, 1. His resolution to glory in the cross of Christ. 2. The effects of the cross of Christ upon his soul; which being contrary to the disposition, and doctrine, and endeavour of the false teachers, is added as a reason of his abhorring their ways, and as the ground or principle of his contrary course: "Hereby the world is crucified to him, and he to the world."

The difficulties in the words being not great, I shall take leave to be briefer in their explication. The verb *καυχᾶσθαι*, signifieth not only external boasting, but first internal confidence and acquiescence. By "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," we are to understand both his cross as suffered by him, and as considered by us, and as imitated by us, or the cross we suffer in conformity to him: for I see no reason to take it in a more restrained sense.

By "the world," is meant, the whole inferior creation, or all that is objected to our sense, or is the bait or provision for the flesh, or by the tempter is put in competition with God: both the things and the men the world.

To have "the world crucified to him," doth signify, 1. That it is killed, and so disabled from doing him any deadly harm, or from being able to steal away his affections, as it doth theirs that are unsanctified. 2. That he esteemeth it but as a dead and contemptible thing. So that this phrase, expresseth both its disabling, and his positive contempt of it.

The other phrase, that Paul was "crucified to the world," doth signify on the other side, 1. That his estimation and affections were as dead to it; that is, he had no more esteem of it, or love to it, nor did he further mind or regard it, (so far as he was sanctified) than a dead man would do. 2. It signifieth that he was also contemned by worldly men, and looked on as his crucified Lord was, whom he preached.

This is said to be done "by Christ," or "by his cross;" for the relative may relate to either antecedent. But I should rather refer it to the latter, though in sense the difference is small; because the one is implied in the other.

The further explication of the nature of this crucifixion, and the influence that Christ and his cross have thereunto,

and how they are the causes of it, must be further spoke to, in the handling of the doctrines, which are as follow :

Doct. I. The carnal glorying of worldly professors, is a thing detested and renounced by the saints.

Doct. II. A crucified Christ, or Christ and his cross, is the glorying of the saints.

Doct. III. The world is crucified to the saints, and they to the world.

Doct. IV. It is by a crucified Christ, or by Christ and his cross, that this is done.

But because our limited time will not allow us to handle each of these distinctly, I shall reduce them all to one general Doctrine, which is the sense of the text.

Doct. The world is crucified to the saints, and the saints are crucified to the world, by the cross of Christ; and therefore in it alone must they glory, abhorring the glory of carnal men.

The method which I shall observe, as fittest for your edification in handling this doctrine, is this :

I. I shall more fully shew you negatively what it is not, and affirmatively what it is, to have the world crucified to us, and to be crucified to the world.

II. I shall shew you how this is wrought by the cross of Christ.

III. I shall give you the reasons, which prove that so it is.

IV. I shall give you the reasons why it must be so.

V. I shall make application of this first part of the Doctrine. And then handle the latter part as time shall permit.

I. There are few doctrines of faith, or ways of holiness, but have their extremes, which men will reel into from side to side, when few will consist in the sacred mean. The purblind world cannot cut by so small a thread, as the word of God directeth them to do, and as all must do, that will be conducted into truth. We have much ado to take men off these vanities; but yet when many of them are convinced, and see that the world must be cast aside, they mistake the nature of holy mortification, and embrace instead of it some superstitious and cynical conceits; in which they are as fast bemired almost as they were before.

1. I shall therefore first tell you what is not the crucifixion which we are to treat of.

1. It is not to think that the world is indeed nothing; and that in a proper sense our life is but a dream: nor yet sceptically to take the being and modes of all things as uncertain. Nor to imagine that sense is so far fallible, that a man of sound sense and understanding, may not be sure of the objects conveniently presented to his sense. There still remaineth one argument which the sceptics were never able to confute, but will make them at any time to yield the cause; even to scourge them, as fools, till they are sure to feel it. But we have few of these to deal with; the scepticism of our times being restrained to those things which more closely concern the matter of salvation.

2. Nor is it any part of the meaning of this text, that we should entertain a low and base esteem of the world, or any thing therein, as in its natural state considered, it is the work of God. For though man be eminently created in his image, yet all his works are like him in their measure, and therefore have all an excellency to be admired. It cannot be that Infinite Wisdom can make any thing which shall not have some impressions and demonstrations thereof. Nor can Goodness make any thing but what is good. And never did the Almighty make any thing that is absolutely contemptible; nor any thing so mean, which can be done by any other without him; so far inimitable is he in the smallest of his works. Nor did he ever make any thing in vain; but those things which seem small and useless to us, have an unsearchable excellency and usefulness which we know not of. If the unskilful have the modesty to believe that the smallest string in an instrument of music, and the smallest pin in a watch, have their use, though he know not of it, we have great reason to think as modestly of the frame of all the works of God. And those things that in themselves considered are small, yet respectively and virtually may be very great. The heart may do more to the preservation of life, than a part much bigger; and the eye may see more than all the rest of the body besides. And the order, location and respects of several parts, doth give them such an admirable usefulness and excellency, which none can know that seeth not the whole frame.

Yea, our own selves, souls or bodies, considered as the workmanship of God, must not be thought or spoke contemptibly of. For so by all that we say against the work,

we do but reproach and dishonour the workman. In all our self-accusations and condemnations, we must take heed of accusing or condemning our Creator. Our naturals therefore must be honoured, while our corrupt morals are vilified. We must disgrace nothing that is of God, but only that which may be truly called our own; nor in the accusation of our own, must we by reflections and consequences accuse that which is God's, as if the fault in the original were his. By giving us our natural freewill, which is a self-determining power, he made us capable of having somewhat in morality which we may too justly call our own; and our loss and want of moral freedom, (which is but our right dispositions and inclinations) were not to be charged ultimately on ourselves, if the foresaid natural freedom did not make us capable of such a culpability. It is a strange way that some men have devised, of magnifying the Creator by vilifying his works: and it is a strange conceit that all the praise that is given to the creature is taken from God: they would not do so by man: the praise of a house is taken to be no dishonour to the carpenter; nor the commendation of a watch a dishonour to the watchmaker. God did not dishonour himself, when he said, his works in the beginning were all good: he would never have been a Creator, if all the good which he made and communicated had been to his dishonour: when there was nothing but himself in being, there was nothing but himself to be commended; but doubtless, God intended his glory by his works; and all that is in them proceeding from himself, the praise of them redoundeth to himself. In a word, we must be very careful of God's interest in his creatures, and take heed of any such contempt or vilifying of them, which may reflect upon himself.

3. The crucifying of the world to us, doth not consist in our looking upon it as a useless thing, or laying it aside as to all spiritual improvement. No; so far is this from being any part of our duty, that it is none of the least of our sins; the creature was the first book that ever God did make for us, in which we might read his blessed perfections: and the perverting it to another use, with the neglect of this, was man's first sin. As it was the great work of the Redeemer, to bring us back to God that made us, and restore us to his favour, so also to restore us to a capacity of serving him,

even in that employment which he appointed to us in our innocency ; which was to see God in the face of his creatures, and there to love and honour him, and by them to serve him. Though this be not our highest felicity, yet it is the way thereto ; till we come to see face to face, we must be glad to see the face of God in the glass of his works. But of this we have more to say anon in the application.

Our crucifying of or to the world, requireth not any secession from the world, nor a withdrawing ourselves from the society of men, nor the casting away the property or possession of the necessities which we possess. It is an easier thing to throw away our master's talents, than faithfully to improve them. The Papists glory in the holiness of their church, because they have many among them that have vowed never to marry, and have no property in lands or houses, and have separated themselves into a monastical society : a high commendation to their church, when men must be sainted with them, if they will do no mischief, though they make themselves useless to the rest of the world. The servant that hid his talent in a napkin, was condemned by Christ as wicked and slothful ; and shall he be commended by us for extraordinarily devout ? Will you reward that servant that will lock up himself in his chamber, or hide his head in a hole, when he should be busy at your work ? Or will you reward that soldier that will withdraw from the army into a corner, when he should be fighting ? The world swarms on every side with multitudes of ignorant and impenitent sinners, whose miserable condition crieth loud for some relief, to all that are any way able to relieve them. And these religious monks make haste from among them, and leave them to themselves to sink or swim, and they think this cruelty to be the top of piety. Unworthy is that man to live on the earth, that liveth only to himself, and communicateth not the gifts of God to others. And yet do these idle, unprofitable drones esteem their course the life of perfection. When we must charge through the thickest of our enemies, and bear all the unthankful requitals of the world, and undergo their scorns and persecutions, these wary soldiers can look to their skin, and get out of the reach of such encounters ; and when they have done, imagine that they have got the victory. To live to ourselves, were it never so spiritually, is far unlike the life of a Chris-

tian : a good man is a common good, and compassionate to the miserable, and desirous to bring others to the participation of his felicity. To withdraw from the world to do God service, is to get out of the vineyard or shop, that we may do our master's work.

If you have riches, it is not casting them away that shall excuse you, instead of a holy improving them for God. If you have possessions, it is not a renouncing of property that shall excuse you from the prudent and charitable use of them. The same I say also of relations, of offices in the church and commonwealth. God calleth you not to renounce them : to crucify the world is not to disclaim all the relations, possessions or honours of the world. These are not yours but God's ; and as he put them into your hand, and commanded you faithfully to use them as his stewards, so you must do it ; and not think it a good account of your stewardship, to tell God that you threw away the talents that he trusted you with, because they were temptations to you, or because he was austere. I should have no great need to speak of this, were there not such a multitude of deluded souls that have lately received the Popish dotages herein. It is one thing to creep into a monk's cell, or an anchorite's cave, or a hermit's wilderness, or Diogenes' tub ; and another thing truly to be crucified to the world ; and in the midst of the creatures to live above them unto God ; as we are anon to shew.

5. To be crucified to the world, is not to forbear our lawful trades and labours in the world. He that bids us eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and would not have him eat that will not labour, (Gen. iii. 19. 2 Thess. iii. 6. 10. 12.) did never call men to be begging friars, nor licentious prodigals, nor idle gentlemen, nor lazy, unprofitable burdens of the earth. All idleness that is wilful, is sinful ; but that which is cloaked with the pretence of religion is a double sin. When some servants grow lazy, they will pretend piety for it, and accuse their masters of worldliness for setting them to work. And some that have families will neglect their duty for them, and all upon pretence of a contempt of the world. But he that bid us " use the world as not abusing it," (1 Cor. vii. 31.) did never mean to forbid us the use of it. While such hypocrites will needs be more than Christians, they become in Paul's judgment worse than infidels ; 1 Tim.

v. 8. They should not labour with a desire to be rich, yet must they “labour to give to him that needeth;” Idleness is not mortification.

6. To be crucified to the world, or the world to us, containeth not an unthankful undervaluing of our mercies. It will not warrant us to say, health, and riches, and honours are contemptible; and therefore I owe God but little thanks for them; nor will it excuse any ungrateful insensibility of our deliverances.

7. To crucify the world, is not to take away the lives of the men of the world, nor actually to use them as they used Christ. Though the magistrates must bring a false prophet to capital punishment that sought to turn the people from God, yet every one might not do so: nor is that any part of the sense of this text; nor was it thus that Paul did crucify the world.

8. Much less may it encourage any poor, melancholy, tempted souls to be weary of their lives, and to seek to make away with themselves. This horrid sin is far from the duty here required. To be crucified to the world is not to rid ourselves out of the world; nor to do that to ourselves, which were so heinous a sin if we did it to another, as not here to be more lightly punished than with death.

And thus I have shewed you negatively, what it is not to have the world crucified to us; which I do both to prevent extremes, and to prevent your unjust censures of the doctrine which I must next deliver, that you may see that I am not leading you into extremes, but insisting on a plain and needful truth.

II. I am next affirmatively to shew what this crucifixion is. And first of the former branch: What it is to have the world to be crucified to us. Where we shall speak of the object, and then of the acts.

Quest. 1. ‘In what respects is it that the world must be crucified to us?’

Answ. In general. 1. In those respects in which men fell to the world from God. The state of man’s apostacy is an adhesion to the creature, and a departure from God; and the state of his recovery must be a departing from the creature, and an adhering unto God. 2. In those respects in which Christ himself hath opposed and overcome the world, in those must his people oppose and overcome it.

More particularly ; though it be but one and the same thing which they all import, yet I think it may the better insinuate into your understandings, if I present it to you in these various notions.

1. As the creature would be man's felicity, or any part of his true felicity, so it is to be hated, resisted, and crucified. If the world would know its own place, it might be esteemed and used in its place ; but if it will needs pretend to be what it is not, and will promise to do what it cannot, and so would not only be used but enjoyed, we must take it for a deceiver, and rise up against it with the greatest detestation. For else it will be the certain damnation of our souls. For he that hath a wrong end, is wrong in all the means ; and doth much worse than lose his labour in every step of his way. It is the greatest and most pernicious error in the world, to mistake in our very end, and about our chiefest good. When once the world would seem to be your home, and promiseth you content and satisfaction, and is indeed the condition that you would have ; so that you do not heartily and desirously look any further, but would with all your heart take this for your portion, if you knew but how to keep it when you have it, and begin to say, 'It is good to be here,' and with that stigmatized fool, 'Soul take thy rest,' then hath the world perniciously deceived you, and if you be not effectually recovered, will be your everlasting ruin. Whatever it be that presenteth itself to you (of this world) as your felicity, is to be hated, opposed, and crucified.

Yea, if it would but share in this office and honour, and would seem to be some part of your happiness, thus also must it die to you, or your souls must die. You can have but one ultimate principal end and happiness. If you take the world for it, you can expect no more. The covetousness of such is said to be idolatry, (Col. iii. 5.) and "their bellies to be their God," (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) and "their gain to be their godliness," (1 Tim. vi. 5.) and "their portion is in this life," (Psal. xvii. 14.) and so they are called men of the world. Here they "lay up a treasure to themselves," and therefore here is their hearts, (Matt. vi. 19—21.) and "verily they have their reward ;" ver. 5.

2. As the creature is set in competition with God, or in the least degree of co-ordination with God, so it is to be

hated, rejected, and crucified. It is God's prerogative to have sovereign interest in the soul. To be esteemed and loved as our chiefest good, and to be depended on as the principal cause of our wellbeing. The heart he made for himself, and the heart he will have; or else whoever hath it shall have it to its woe. He will be its rest, or it shall never have rest; and he will be its happiness, or it shall be miserable everlastingly. If now the presumptuous world will play the traitor, and seek to dispossess the sovereign of your souls, it is time to use it as a traitor should be used. If it will needs usurp the place of God, down with that idol and deal with it as it deserves. O with what indignation and scorn may the Lord of glory look down upon the dirty, worthless creature, when he seeth it in his throne! What! an earthen God! an airy God! Is gold, and honour, and fleshly pleasures, fit matter to become your God? And with what indignation and scorn should a gracious soul once hear the motion of entertaining such a God! It should be odious to us once to hear a comparison between the living God and the world! as if it would be to us what he would be, or could procure our safety and felicity in his stead. As the Jews would not endure to hear of Christ being their King, but cried out, "Away with him, crucify him, we have no king but Cæsar." So must we think and speak of the world when it would be our king. Away with it, crucify it, we have no king but God in Christ. And as the rebellious world saith of Christ (Luke xix. 27.), "We will not have this man to rule over us," so must we say of the flesh and the world, we will not have them to rule over us. As the churlish Israelite asked Moses (the prophet like Christ) so must we do the flesh and world; "Who made thee a ruler over us?" We may value a very dunghill for the manuring of our land; but if any man will say, 'This dunghill is the sun, which giveth light to the world; the assertion would rather cause derision than belief. Or if you would persuade a man to put it in his bosom or his bed, he would cast it away with abhorrence and disdain, who would not have refused it if you had laid it in his field. The poorest beggar may be regarded in his place; but if he will proclaim himself king, you will either laugh at him as a fool, or abhor him as a traitor. Subjects do owe much honour and obedience to their princes; but if Caligula will

needs be Jupiter, or if they must hear as the pope, 'Dominus Deus noster Papa', or if they will usurp God's prerogatives, and undertake his proper work, or will set themselves against his truth and interest, and grow jealous of his power on which they must depend, and of his Gospel and spiritual administrations and discipline, lest it should eclipse their glory, or cross their wills, this is the ready way to make them become base, and lay both them and their glory in the dust. The Jews ought to reverence Herod their king, but if once they begin to say, 'It is the voice of a God, and not of a man,' no wonder if he be smitten by the hand of Divine vengeance, and he that would be a god, become the food of worms; and God shews them what a god they had magnified, that cannot keep the lice or worms from eating him alive. God useth to pour contempt upon princes, when they will not know and submit to the everlasting king. He taketh himself as engaged to break down all that would usurp his honour, and tumble down the idols of the world; therefore hath he always so abhorred the two grand abominations, pride and idolatry, above other sins. For he will not give his glory to another. He will not with patience hear it spoken of an idol, 'These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of Egypt.' The first commandment is not merely a precept for some particular act of obedience, as are the rest; but it is the fundamental law of God, establishing the very relations of sovereign and subject. And as this is the first and great command, and that which virtually containeth all, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," or "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." So he that breaketh this, is guilty of all. When the parent of the world would needs become as God, he made himself the slave of the devil.

You see then, I hope, sufficient reason why the world must be abhorred and crucified, when it is made an idol, and would become our God; and why this crucifixion of it is of absolute, indispensable necessity to salvation. If it had kept its place and distance, and would have been only a stream from the infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, and a messenger to bring us the report of his excellencies, and a book in which we might read his name, and a glass in which we might see his face, then might we have esteemed and magnified it. But when the devil and the flesh

will make it their bait to draw away our hearts from God, and to steal that love, desire, and care, which is due him, and begin to tell us of rest, or satisfaction, or felicity here, it is time to cry out, Crucify it, crucify it. When it would insinuate itself into our bosom, and get next our hearts, and have our most delightful and frequent thoughts, and become so dear to us, that we cannot be without it; when it is the very thing that our minds are bent upon, and that lifts us up when we have it, and casts us down when we want it: and thus disposeth of our affections and endeavours, it is time to lay such an idol in the dust, and to cast out such a traitor with the greatest detestation. As we ourselves shall be exalted if we humble ourselves, and brought low if we exalt ourselves: so must we cast down the world, when it would exalt itself in our esteem; and the right exaltation of it is by the lowest subjecting of it unto God. For whoever hath to deal with Infinite power, must think of no other way of exaltation.

3. The world must be abhorred, and crucified by us, as it standeth at enmity to God and his holy ways. It is become, through man's corruption, the great seducer, and an impediment to our entertainment of heavenly doctrine, and a means of keeping the soul from God. Yea, it is become the interest of the flesh, and is set in fullest opposition to our spiritual interest. In what degree soever the world would turn your hearts from God, or stop your ears against his word, or take you off from the duty which he prescribeth you, in that measure you must seek to crucify it to yourselves. If father or mother would draw us away from Christ, though as parents they must be honoured still, yet as enemies to Christ they must be contemned. When your honours would hinder you from honouring God, and your credit doth contend against your conscience, and your worldly business contradicteth your heavenly business, and your gain is pleaded against your obedience; it is time then to use the world as an enemy, and to vilify those honours and businesses, and commodities. A tender conscience that is acquainted with a course of universal obedience, will take notice when these worldly interpositions and avocations would interrupt his course: and a soul acquainted with a holy dependance upon God and communion with him, can

feel when these enticing and deluding things would interrupt his communion, and turn his eye from the face of God: and therefore he can feel by the advantage of his holy experience, when the world becomes his enemy, and calleth him to the conflict.

4. The world is to be crucified, as it is the matter of our flesh-pleasing; or the food of our carnal affections, and the fuel of our concupiscence. The grand idol that is exalted against the Lord, is carnal-self. This is the God of all the unregenerate. This hath their hearts, their care, their labours. The pleatings of this flesh is the end of the unsanctified, and therefore the summary capital sin, which virtually containeth all the rest. Even as the pleasing of God is the end of every saint, and therefore the summary capital duty, which virtually containeth all other duties. The world is an idol subservient to the flesh, as being the matter of its delight, and the means by which its end is attained; as in the contrary state, the Mediator is subservient to the Father, as being the matter of his delight in whom he is well-pleased, and the means by whom he obtaineth his ends, in making his people also wellpleasing in his eyes. The devil also is an idol of the ungodly; but that is in a subserviency to the world and to the flesh, as by the bait of worldly things he pleaseth the flesh; as in the contrary state the Holy Ghost is in office subordinate to the Son and to the Father, in that he bringeth us to Christ, by whom we must have access to the Father. In the carnal trinity then you may see, that as the flesh is the principal and ultimate end, and hath the first place, so the world is the nearest means to that end, and hath the second place: and as there is no coming to the Father or pleasing him but by the Son, so there is no way of pleasing the flesh but by the world. So that by this you may perceive in what relation we stand to the sensual, seducing world, and on what grounds, and how far it is necessary that we crucify it. The fixed determination of our sovereign is, that if "we live after the flesh we shall die, but if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live;" Rom. viii. 13. To live after the flesh, is by loving the world, and enjoying it as our felicity; and to mortify the deeds of it by the Spirit, is by withdrawing this fuel and food that doth maintain them, and by crucifying and killing the world as to such ends. Our work is to

“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;” Rom. xiii. 14. It is the world that is this provision for the fulfilling of our fleshly lusts. So far therefore as the flesh must be mortified, the world also must be mortified.

5. Moreover the world must be crucified to us, as far as it is presented to us as an independent, or separated good, without its due relations unto God. It is God only who is the absolute, necessary, independent Being; and all creatures are but secondary, contingent, dependent beings, (whether univocally or equivocally, or analogically so called, with God, let the schools debate). To look on the creature as a separated or simple being or good, is to look upon it as God. And here came in the first idolatry of the world. When Adam had all his felicity in God, and had the creature only as a stream and means, and when all his affections should have been centred in God, and he should not have viewed one line in the volume of nature, without the joint observance of the centre where it was terminated; contrarily he withdraws his eye from God, and fixeth it on the creature, as a separated good; and desiring to know good in this separated sense, he made it an evil to him, and knew it to his sorrow. And so forsaking the true and All-sufficient Good, he turned to a good which indeed, as conceived of by him, was no good, and knew it by a knowledge, which as to the truth of it, was not knowing, but erring. And in this course which our first progenitors have led us into, the carnal world proceedeth to this day. The creature is near them, but God is far off. A little they know of the creature, but they are utter strangers to God. And therefore think on the creature as independent, separated good. And you must carefully note, that the dependence of the creature on God, is not to be fully manifest by the dependence of any creature upon another. The line is locally distant from the centre; and the streams are locally distant from the spring, though they are contiguous, and have the dependency of an effect. But God is not local, and so not locally distant from us. The nearest similitude is that of the body's dependence on the soul (which yet doth fall exceeding short). In God both we and every creature do live, and move, and have our being. As no man of reason will talk to a corpse, nor dwell and converse with any man mere-

ly as corporeal, without respect to the soul that doth animate him, nor will he fall in love with a corpse ; so no man that is spiritually wise (so far as he is so) will once look upon any creature, much less converse with it, or fall in love with it, barely as a creature, conceiving it as a thing that is separated from God, or not positively conceiving of God as animating it, and as being its Alpha and Omega, its Beginning and End, its principal efficient, and ultimate, final cause, at least. For this were to imagine the carcase of a creature, and to conceive of it as such a thing as is not in being. For out of the God of nature the creature is nothing, nor can do any thing ; for there is no such thing ; even as out of Christ the Lord of spiritual life and grace, the new creature is nothing, and we can do nothing : for there is no such new creature.

You have here the very difference between a carnal and a spiritual life. The carnal man doth see only the carcase of the world, and is blind to God, and seeth not him, when he seeth that which is animated by him. But the spiritual man seeth God in and by the creature, and the creature is nothing to him but in God. As an illiterate man doth look upon a book, and seeth only the letters, and taketh pleasure in their shape and order, and falls a playing with it as children do ; but he seeth not, nor understands the sense ; and therefore if it contained the most noble mysteries of the greatest promises, even such as his life did depend upon, he loveth it not in any such respect ; nor doth he for that delight in it : but let a learned man have the perusing of the same book, and though he may commend the clearness of the character, yet it is the sense that he principally observeth and the sense that he loveth, and the sense that he delighteth in ; and therefore as the sense is incomparably more excellent than the character simply considered, so it is a higher and more excellent kind of knowledge and delight which he hath in the book, than that which the illiterate hath. And indeed it is an imaginary annihilation of the book, and of every character of it, formally considered, to conceive of it as separated from the sense ; for the very essence of it, is to be a sign of that sense ; and therefore as the illiterate cannot see the sense of words and letters, the wood for trees, so the literate can see no such thing as words without sense, nor would regard the materials but for this signifying use.

I have expressed the similitude in more words than I use in such cases, because it much illustrateth our present matter. It was never the mind of God to make the great body of this world to stand as a separated thing, or to be an idol. He made all this for himself. The whole creation is one entire volume, and the sense of every line is God. His name is legible on every creature, and he that seeth not God in all understandeth not the sense of the creation. As it is eternal life to know God, so this God is the life of the creature which we know, and the knowing of him in it is the life of all our knowledge. The illiterate world doth gaze upon the creatures, and fall in love with the outside and materials, and play with it, but understandeth not a creature. By separating it in their apprehensions from God, the sense, they do annihilate the world to themselves, as to its principal use and signification.

There are two texts of Scripture, among many others, of which I have often thought, as notable descriptions of a carnal man's life; the one as to the privative part, and the other as to the positive. One is Ephes. ii. 12. which calleth them "Atheists, or without God in the world." They see and know somewhat of the world, but God they neither see nor know. They converse with the world, but not with God. All their affections are let out upon the world, but God hath none of them. All their business is about the world; but they live as if they had nothing to do with God. As a scholar, if his master should stand in a corner of the school to watch what he will do, will behave himself while he seeth him not, as if he were not there; he will play with his fellows and talk to them, as if there were no master in the school: so do the ungodly live in the world, as if there were no God in the world; they think, and speak, and deal with the world, as if there were nothing but the world for them to converse with. As for God, they know him not, but carry themselves as if they had nothing to do with him; and ask in their hearts, as Pharaoh once did, "Who is the Lord that I should serve him?" And perhaps this made David say, "the fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" Psal. xiv. 1. Though he speak it not positively, yet there is a privative atheism, which is interpretatively to say, There is no God. For he seeth him not, nor taketh any great notice of him; but liveth as without him in the world. Not

without him efficiently considered ; for so nothing can subsist without him, but without him objectively considered. "For God is not in all his thoughts;" (Psal. x. 4, 5.) and his judgments are far above, out of his sight. God looketh down upon the children of men, to see if there be any that will understand and seek after God ; but they are gone aside, and are become filthy, and observe not him that observeth them ;" Psal. xiv. 2, 3. This is the case of poor worldlings, from the highest prince to the lowest beggar. A great deal of business they have in the world, some in seeking what they want, and others in holding and enjoying what they have ; but they all live as without God in the world. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you ;" Psal. l. 22. "For the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God ;" ix. 17.

The other text that describeth the life of a mere natural man, is Psal. xxxix. 6. to which you may join Psal. lxxiii. 20. The former saith, "Surely every man walketh in a vain show ; surely they are disquieted, or make a tumult and stir in vain." Though the brevity of life itself may be something here intended, yet that seemeth not to be all ; but also the vanity of it, as it is a worldly life, and employed merely about transitory creatures. For even on earth our spiritual life of grace, and communion with God in Christ by the Spirit, is not vain. The word which we translate a 'vain show,' signifieth the image, or shadow, or appearance, or figure of a thing : a thing that is nothing, or not the thing it seems to be, but the show of it ; or as the prophet himself expoundeth it, a dream. Men do but seem to live, that live only on and to the creature ; they do but seem to be rich, and have no other riches ; and seem to have pleasure that have no higher pleasures ; and seem to be honourable, that have but the honour that comes from man. A great stir they make in the world, to little purpose. They thrust themselves into tumults, and quarrel, and fight, and some are conquered, and others conquerors, and some lament, and others rejoice ; some walk dejectedly, and others domineer ; all is but a vain show, or thing of naught. It is but like children's games, where all is done in jest, and wise men account it not worthy their observance. It is but like the acting of a comedy, where great persons and actions are personated and

counterfeited ; and a pompous stir there is for a while, to please the foolish spectators, that themselves may be pleased by their applause, and then they come down, and the sport is ended, and they are as they were. The life of a worldling is but like a puppet-play, where there is great doings to little purpose. Or like the busy gadding of the laborious ants, to gather together a little sticks and straw, which the spurn of a man's foot will soon disperse. Thus do all worldly, sensual men walk in a vain show. By separating the creature from God, they make it nothing ; and then they study it, and dispute of it, and seek, and run, and labour for it, when they have in a sort annihilated it. I speak still of their objective separation 'in esse cognito et voluto : ' for a real separation is impossible, but as a real annihilation may be so called. When they have separated the characters of the great book of nature from God, who is their sense, and made nothing of it, as to the form of a book, then do they fall a playing with it, who could not endure to learn on it. But when their Master comes to take an account of their learning, the play will be at an end, and the sorrow begins : and then they must remember and feel that their book was given them to another use.

And this seems to be the sense of that other text ; " As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, (or in awaking) thou shalt despise their image ;" Psal. lxxiii. 20. Though our translators apply it to God's awaking, that is, to judgment, yet many learned interpreters rather apply the word 'in awaking' to the sinner's awaking at judgment, out of the aforesaid dream of a sensual life. They do but labour, and care, and gather as in a dream ; they fight, and conquer, and possess but as in a dream. They dream that they are rich, and honourable, and happy, and how proudly do they carry it out in this dream. One dreameth that he is a great man, and he is lifted up ; another dreameth that he is poor and undone, and he is troubled ; but when God awaketh the dreaming world, he will show them the vanity and despicableness of this image or shew that here they walked in. They shall see that, as in a game at chess, though one was imaginarily a king, and another a queen, yet it was but imaginary ; and when the tedious game is ended, they have laboured hard to do nothing, and are all alike ; so will it be with them. The meaning is not only that God himself

will despise this their show or imaginary employments and enjoyments ; but that he will make them appear despicable to themselves and all the world.

Truly brethren, all that we have to do with the world in a separated sense, as without God, is such a game, a dream, a show. When scholars are thus studying their physics or metaphysics, or any thing of the creature, as separated from God, yea, or as not studying God in that creature, they are but playing the children and fools : they are like a printer that cannot read, (if there were such a man,) that studieth how to shape his letters, when he knoweth not what a letter meaneth. When they are disputing in the schools about God's works, in this separated sort, as without God, they are busily playing the idiots, and taking the name of God in vain, and making a learned stir about nothing.

And here, I pray you, mark the different successes of a sensual, and of a sanctified study and knowledge. The first sinner, by seeking to know and enjoy the creature in a separated sort, did lose God who was his all, and made the creature his all ; and thereby, as to its signification and principal use, did to himself annihilate it. And in this path do all his posterity walk, till faith recover them ; and this is their vain show, and their living without God in the world. But when faith hath opened a man's eyes, and shewed him God in every creature, who was hid from him before, then is the creature, who was before his all, annihilated to him in that separated sense, and God becomes his all again : and this annihilation of the creature, is indeed its restoration objectively to its primitive nature and use ; and it was not indeed known or respected as a creature till now. So that sensual men, by making the creature an imaginary god, or chiefest good, or all, do make it indeed objectively become nothing ; and so their all, their god, their felicity is nothing ; and so all their life is a nothing. When as the faithful, by crucifying or annihilating the creature, as it would appear a felicity to us, or any good, as separated from God, do restore it to its true objective being and use, by returning to God, who is truly all, and in whom the creature is a derived imperfect something, and out of whom it is indeed a nothing.

I will further illustrate it by one other similitude. God gave the ceremonial law by Moses to the Israelites, to be an obscure Gospel, and to lead them unto Christ. The sacri-

fices, and other typical ceremonies were the letters of the law, and Christ was the sense. The true believers thus understood and used them; but the carnal Jews looked only on the letter, and lost the sense: and thus separating the bare letter from the sense, that is, the legal works from Christ, they thought to be justified by those works, and by the law, in that separated sense. But the apostle Paul doth plead against this error, and tells them that Christ is the end of the law to all believers, and that he is the fulfilling of it; and that through him it is fulfilled in those that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and that by the deeds of the law, in this separated sense, no flesh can be justified; and that the letter, separated from the sense of it, killeth; but Christ, by his Spirit, who is the sense of it, giveth life. If these Jews had taken and used the law as God intended it, and had taken the sense and spirit with the letter, and had understood that Christ was the very life, and end, and all of the law, Paul would never have cried down the law, nor justification by it, in this sense; that had been to cry down justification by Christ. But it was justification by the letter, or the law as separated from Christ, who was the meaning of it. So is it in our present case. The creature is the letter, and God the sense; and carnal men do understand only the letter of the creature, and fall in love with it: and thus God crieth down the world, and vilifieth, and speaketh contemptuously of the world: when as if it had not been for the separation, he would never have cried it down, nor spoken a hard word of it. As the law had never been so hardly spoken of, if the misunderstanding Jew had not separated it from Christ. So the world had never been so often called vanity, and a lie, and nothing, and a dream, and that which is not bread, and that which profiteth not, a shadow, a deceiver, with abundance of the like contemptuous terms, if carnal sinners had not in their minds and affections separated it from God.

And thus I have shewed you in what respects the world must be crucified.

And let me add in the conclusion, as most necessary for your observation, that there is in the world an inseparable aptitude to tempt us dangerously to the aforesaid abuse; and therefore when we have done all that we can in crucifying and sublimating it, we must never imagine that we can

make it so wholesome or harmless a thing, as that we may feed upon it without great caution and suspicion, or ever return to friendship with it again, till fire have refined it, and grace hath perfectly refined us. And yet this is not long of the creature without us, but of us and the tempter. The world is in itself good, as being the work of God; and it cannot be the proper, efficient, culpable cause of our sin: for it hath no sin in itself. (I mean the world, as distinct from the men of the world); and therefore cannot be the direct cause of sin. But yet there is that in it, which is apt to be the matter of our temptation; and so apt, as that all that perish do perish by the world. As there is no salvation but by the whole Trinity conjunct, who have each person his several office for our recovery; so there is no damnation but by the whole infernal trinity, the flesh, the world and the devil: even to innocent Adam the world must be the bait, and satan found somewhat in it, that made it apt for such an office, though nothing but what was very good. But now that the flesh is become the predominant part and power in us, as it is in all till the Spirit overcome it, the case is much worse, and the world is incomparably a more dangerous enemy than to Adam it could be. For though still the creature be good in itself, yet we are so bad, that the better the creature is, the worse it becomes to us: for we are naturally propense to it in its separated capacity, and all men till regeneration are fond of it as their felicity, and hug it as their dearest good, and sacrifice to it as their idol. So that an enemy it is, and an enemy it will be when we have done our best, as long as we are on earth. For while we have a flesh that would fain be pleased by that which God forbiddeth, and there is a devil to offer us the bait, and tempt us to this flesh-pleasing, the world, which is the bait, will still be the matter and occasion of our danger. The consideration of this may cut the throat of licentious principles, and hence we may answer the most of their vain, pretended reasons, who, under the cloke of Christian liberty, would again indulge the flesh, and be reconciled to the world. But certainly it will never lay by its enmity till we lay by our flesh; and therefore there are no thoughts to be entertained of closing with it any more; but we must be killing it, and dying to it to the last.

Having thus shewed you in what respect the world must

be crucified, and so resolved the question as to the object, I am next to resolve it as to the act, and shew you wherein the crucifying it doth consist.

The apostle followeth on the allegory, which he took occasion of from the mention of the cross of Christ. From thence therefore we must also fetch the proper sense. As the world did use Christ, or would have used him, so we must use the world. Not actually murder the sons of death, as they did murder the Lord of life; but what Christ was on the cross in their eye, that must the world be esteemed in our eyes.

To take it in order. 1. The predictions of the prophets before Christ's coming, were not regarded by the unbelieving Jews, but the prophets themselves persecuted.

So those that would persuade us of the felicity of any worldly enjoyments, and by extolling sensual pleasures, or profits, or honours, would draw our hearts to them, should be despised and esteemed as deceivers by us. No man is more serviceable to the devil for our destruction, than they that applaud any sensual vanity, and would make us believe what great matters are to be expected from the world, and so would be the panders of it to entice to its unchaste embracements. Remember this, when any would persuade you what a fine thing it is to be rich and great, and somebody in the world; what a merry life it is to drink, and sport away your time: these are the prophets and apostles of the devil and the world, and let them be regarded by you accordingly.

2. As soon as Christ was born into the world, his best place of entertainment was a common inn; and there he could have room but in a stable and in a manger; the world would allow him no better accommodation; and this was the welcome that it first afforded him.

Here you have two notable Directions for your usage of the world. 1. Begin to renounce it betimes, as it did Christ. As the world rejected Christ an infant, so we in our infancy must reject the world. This is to be solemnly performed in baptism; where, as we are engaged to the saving Trinity, and baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, so must we solemnly renounce the damning trinity, even the flesh, the world and the devil: for so the church hath ever done, and the nature of the thing doth manifestly require it;

for the 'motus' must have its 'terminus à quo,' as well as 'ad quem.' It is a sad thing that so many well-meaning men should deny our infant capacity of this engagement; but much more sad that they should do it with such church-dividing zeal, as if the kingdom of God lay in the exclusion of the seed of believers out of it. If it be true that all our infant seed are excluded from the church, I am sure it is so sad a truth, that methinks men should not so eagerly lay hold of it, before they have better evidence to evince it. It was once a mercy for infants to be in covenant with God, and members of his church; and I do not think that it is now a mercy to be out, or that the kingdom of the devil is the more desirable state; (and all men are in one of these). Sure I am, they were once members of the church by God's appointment, and they that say they are cast out, must prove it, and better than any that yet have attempted it, if they would have judicious, considerate, impartial men believe them. Whoever cast them out, sure Christ would not, that did so much enlarge the church and better its state, and manifest more abundant mercy, and chide his disciples that kept such from him, and proclaimed that his kingdom was of such. I am not easily persuaded that the Head and King of the church hath actually gathered a society of a false constitution so long, and that he that is so tender of his church, and hath bought it so dearly, and ruled it so faithfully, had never a true constituted, visible church, till about two hundred years ago, among a few such as I have no mind to describe, and that we must now have a new and true church-frame to begin, when the world is almost at an end: and that this glory, reserved for our last days, consisteth in casting out our infant seed, and leaving them in the visible kingdom of the devil, till they come to age. I am more out of doubt than ever I was, that God would have our infants renounce the world, and be dedicated unto him, as the world did renounce Christ an infant. If an infant Christ must be the Head of the church, I know not why an infant sinner may not be a member of it: and as the world without reason, through malice, rejected our infant Head; so God will find both reason and love to receive and entertain his infant members. And as long as we have God's express approbation in his word, for parents' entering their children into his covenant, and have the examples of all nations by

the law of nature, allowing parents to enter their children into covenants which are apparently for their good, and to put their names into their leases with their own, we shall not think our infants incapable of covenanting with God, nor of making this early abrenunciation of the world.

2. From hence also you may learn what room it is that the world should be allowed by you, even the stable and the manger, as it allowed Christ. This is a point of most necessary consideration. The soul of man hath its several faculties : as vegetative, it hath its natural parts, and spirits, and powers, and a natural appetite after the creature. This is the stable and the manger, where the creature, as a good, may be entertained : it hath also a sensitive, its power of sensation, and sensitive appetite. This also may entertain the creature ; but not for itself, nor by its own conduct ; but under the guidance of reason to a higher end. But the high and noble faculty of reason, and the rational appetite, may not allow it the least entertainment in its separated capacity, as we are now discoursing of it. It belongeth not to the natural or sensitive powers to see and love God in the creature ; and therefore it cannot be required of them ; and therefore they may receive their objects, (moderate by reason,) upon lower terms. But it is the office of reason, as to moderate the senses, so to behold God in all the objects of sense : and no otherwise should it have to do with sensual objects, of which more anon.

3. It was not long that Christ had been in the world before Herod sought his life, and caused him to fly into Egypt. And as soon as we are capable of assaulting the world, we must actually fall upon it, and seek the extirpation of all its interest from our hearts, where Christ sets up his throne.

It was for fear of losing his crown, that Herod sought the death of Christ. It must be for fear lest Christ should be dethroned in our hearts, and lose his regal interest, and lest we should lose the crown of glory, that we must endeavour the crucifying of the world.

When angels and wise men did worship Christ, yet Herod did seek his death, and the more seek it, because of their acclamations, as being brought into jealousies of him by the titles which they gave him. So when the princes and great ones of the earth do extol the world, and magnify its

glory, we must be raised hereby into the greater suspicion of it, and the more resolvedly set against it.

As Herod did put to death even the innocent children, lest Christ should escape, that so he might make sure work for his crown; so must we subdue our sensual desires, by denying them sometimes even in lawful things, lest we should be carried to that which is unlawful before we are aware; and we must avoid the very occasions and appearances of evil, and restrain ourselves in the liberty that we might take, and not go as near the brink of danger as we dare: for it concerneth us to make sure work where the reign of Christ and our own salvation is so much concerned, as in our victory over the world it is.

4. The whole life of Christ on earth was one continued conflict with the world. They believed not on him even when they saw his miracles. They hated him even while he did them good. They afforded him not a settled habitation. So, in the height of its glory, the world must not be trusted by us. Though it afford us sustenance for our outward man, yet must we hate it; and we must allow it no settled entertainment in our hearts.

Christ was in the world, and the world was made by him, and yet it knew him not; John i. 10. We converse in the world, and our outward man must live by it, as in it we received our life, and yet we must not know it in its separated capacity: the world could not hate them that were of the world; but Christ it hated, because he was not of it; John vii. 7. xv. 18, 19. xvii. 14. So must we hate the world, because it is not of that nature, nor for that interest as the new creature is, though worldlings that are of it cannot hate it.

The nearer Christ was to the end of his life, the more cruelly and maliciously did the world use him. And the nearer we are to our parting with the world, the more must we contemn and hate it.

5. The world did arraign and condemn Christ as a malefactor: they charged him to be a deceiver, and one that did his mighty works by the power of Beelzebub. So must we justly charge the world to be a deceiver, and work its strange, stupendous delusions by the power of satan the great deceiver, and as a malefactor must we attach, arraign and condemn it. They came out against Christ with swords

and staves ; Matt. xxvi. 55. We must come out against the world as that great thief that would rob God of his honour and interest, Christ of his kingdom, and us of our salvation, and, by the sword of the Spirit, must disarm and conquer it.

The world judged Christ to be a blasphemer, and guilty of death, because he said that he was the Son of God, and should sit at his right hand. We must condemn the world of blasphemous usurpation, that would needs become our God, and usurp the divine prerogatives and honours.

They spit upon Christ in token of hatred and contempt. And we must as it were spit at the pleasures, and profits, and honours of the world, and manifest our defiance, and hatred, and contempt of them.

They buffeted Christ in manifestation of their malicious enmity. And the world and our flesh must not escape our hands ; though our war be but defensive, yet must we offend that we may defend. “ So fight I, (saith Paul, 1 Cor. ix 26, 27.) not as one that beateth the air, (that maketh a show of enmity when there is none, as children in sport, or fencers that have no intent to kill,) but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” ὑπωπιάζω μὲς τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ. The first verb signifieth to buffet and beat black and blue, as we say, ‘ Et validis ictibus subicere reluctantem,’ as Beza speaks, and the second verb signifieth to bring into servitude, or into the state of a servant, which is indeed the very work that we have to do with the flesh and the world.

They reproached Christ when they had smote him, and tauntingly bid him “ prophesy who smote him.” And the world and all the idols of it deserve no better of us, when they will usurp the place of God ; and we may well scorn such a god, as Elias did Baal, and as God useth to do by the idols of the heathen. Fine gods indeed, that can neither save themselves nor us.

The world did strip Christ, and put on him a robe and a crown of thorns, and a reed into his hand, and again spit upon him and mocked him. And this contempt in our apprehensions must we cast upon the arrogant world ; we must strip it of its vain show, and give it the honour of a reed for levity, and of thorns for unprofitableness and vexation ; for

as thorns it vexeth when it promiseth felicity, and as thorns it choketh that word of truth, and as a reed it is shaken with every wind.

No backwardness of the judge, and no intercession of his wife, could rescue Christ from the malice of the Jews; but the more is said for him, the more they cry, "Crucify him." And as resolvedly must we persecute the world. No intercession of our flesh, or backwardness of carnal reason, must take us off; but we must be content with nothing but its crucifying.

When Pilate drew back, they knocked all dead with this malicious voice, John xix. 12. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." So must we quicken and provoke our reason by arguments drawn from our fidelity to Christ, and say, 'If we favour this world, we are not the friends of Christ; for whatsoever would make itself our king, and our felicity, and would steal away our hearts, is not Christ's friend.'

When Pilate saith, "Shall I crucify your king?" they cry out, "we have no king but Cæsar." And when the flesh or carnal reason saith, "Will you cast away your comforts, your peace, your happiness, your lives?" we must say, 'We have no comfort but Christ, no peace but Christ, no happiness, no life but what is in Christ.'

The world crucified Christ between two thieves. And we must crucify the world between two thieves; viz. the flesh on the one hand, and the devil on the other, which would both have robbed God and us; though through the power of a crucified Christ, the one of these, even the flesh, may be so refined as to be admitted into paradise.

The world writ over the head of Christ as the cause of his death, "King of the Jews." And we must write this over the crucified world, 'This is it that would have been our king, and god, and happiness: so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.' We must pierce the very sides of it, and let out its heart-blood. We must nail its hands and feet, the very instruments or means by which it executed its deceits. We must give it the gall and vinegar of penitent tears, and threatened judgments. The world thus "despised and rejected Christ, making him a man of sorrows and acquainted with our griefs; they hid their faces and esteemed him not.

He had no form or comeliness in their eyes, and when they saw him, there was no beauty that they should desire him;" Isa. liii. 2, 3. So must we despise and reject the world, and hide our faces from it, and not esteem it, disdaining even to look upon its pomp and vanity, and to observe its gaudy alluring dress, or once to regard its enticing charms. We must think it all into a loathsome vanity, till there appear to us no form or comeliness in it, nor any beauty that we should desire it, and wonder what they can see in it that so far dote upon it, as to part with Christ and salvation to enjoy it.

The world did even triumph over a crucified Christ, and shake their heads at him, and say, "He saved others, but himself he cannot save." And we must triumph through Christ over the crucified world, and say, This is it that promised such great matters to its deceived followers; that men esteemed before God and glory; and now, as it cannot save them from the dust, or the wrath of God, so neither can it save itself from this contempt that Christ doth cast upon it. Cast down this idol out of your hearts, and say, If he be a god let him help himself.

Lastly, The world when they had crucified Christ did bury him, and roll a stone on his sepulchre, and seal it up, and watch it with soldiers to secure him from rising again, if they could. And we must even bury the crucified world, and be buried to the world, and lay upon it those weighty considerations and resolutions, and seal thereto with sacramental obligations, and follow all this with persevering watchfulness, that may never permit it to revive and rise again.

And thus must we learn from the cross of Christ, how the world is to be crucified; as it used Christ, we must use it. For it is the whole course of Christ's humiliation that is meant here by his cross, the rest being denominated from the most eminent part; and therefore from the whole must we fetch our pattern and instructions, by the direction of the allegory in my text.

But it will not be unprofitable if we more particularly and orderly acquaint you with those acts, which the crucifying of the world to ourselves doth comprehend; overpassing those by which Christ did it for us on the cross, till anon in the due place.

1. The first act is, To esteem the world as an enemy to God and us, and so as a malefactor that deserveth to be crucified. And this must not be only by a speculative conception, but by a true, confirmed, practical judgment, which will set all the powers of the soul on work. It is the want of this that makes the world to live and reign in the hearts of so many, yea, even of thousands that think they have mortified it. A speculative book-knowledge that will only make a man talk, is taken instead of a practical knowledge. Almost every man will say, the world is a great enemy to God and us; but did they soundly and heartily esteem it to be such, they would use it as such. Never tell me that that man takes the world for his deadly enemy, who useth it as his dearest friend; enmity, and deadly enmity, will be seen. Here is no room to plead the command of loving our enemies; at least, no man can think that he must love it with a love of friendship, and therefore with no love but what is consistent with the hatred of a deadly enemy. This serious, deep apprehension of enmity is the very spring and poise of all our opposition. We cannot heartily fight with our friend, or seek his death. There must be some anger and falling out before we will make the first assault: and a settled enmity before we will make a deadly war of it. This apprehension of enmity consisteth in an apprehension of the hurtfulness of the world to us, and of the opposition it maketh against God and our salvation, and of the danger that we are in continually by reason of this opposition. So far as men conceive of the world as good for them, so far they take it for their friend, and love it. For no man can choose but love that which he seriously conceiveth to be good for him. This complacency is clean contrary to the Christian hostility. But when we conceive of it as that which we stand in continual danger of being everlastingly undone by, this will turn our hearts against it. It undoes men that they have not these apprehensions of the world, and that deeply fixed and habituated in their minds. For it is the apprehension or judgment of things that carrieth about the whole man, and setteth awork all the other faculties.

Quest. 'But what should we do to be habitually apprehensive that the world is our enemy?'

Ans. 1. You must be sure that you lay up your treasure in heaven: that you are so convinced by faith of the

glory to come, and of the true felicity that consisteth in the fruition of God, as that you take it for your portion, and make it your very end. And when once you have laid up your hopes in heaven, and see that there or nowhere you must be happy, this will presently teach you to judge of all things else, as they either help or hinder the attainment of that end. For it is the nature of the end to put a due estimate upon all things else: and it is the property of the chief good, to denominate all other things either good or evil, and that in a greater or lesser measure, according as they respect that chiefest good. For there can be no goodness in any thing else, but the goodness of a means; and the means is so far good, as it is apt and useful for the attainment of the end. If once therefore you unfeignedly take God and glory for your end and felicity, you will presently fall upon inquiry and observation, what it is that the world will do to help or hinder that felicity.

2. And then you need but one thing more to the discovery of the enmity; and that is, the constant experience of your souls. A real living Christian doth live for God, and is upon the motion to his eternal home; there is his heart, and that way his affections daily work: when he findeth his soul down, he windeth it up again, and straineth the spring of faith and love. And therefore his life and business being for heaven, he cannot but be sensible of the rubs that are in his way, and take notice of those things that would stop him in this course. Whereupon he must needs find by constant experience that the world is that great impediment, and so must be apprehensive of the enmity of the world. For as he that loveth God and waiteth for the sight of his face in glory, must needs take all that to be against him, and naught for him, that would keep him from God, and deprive him of that beatifical vision; so he that knoweth what it is to love God, must needs know by constant, sad experience, that the world is the great withdrawer or hinderer of that love. When he sets himself in any holy employment to mount his soul into a more heavenly frame, and to get a little nearer God, he feeleth himself too much entangled with inferior objects; these are the weight that presseth down, and the water that quencheth the sacred flames; and were it not for these, O how much higher might our souls attain, and how much freer might we be for God? For it is a thing most

certain by our constant experience, that the more of the world is upon our hearts, the less there is of God; and the more of God, the less of the world. So that these two means alone,—the sincere intending of God and glory as our end, and daily observation of our own hearts, will easily convince us that the world is our great enemy. And when we thoroughly apprehend it to be our enemy, we have begun to crucify it.

3. The next act by which the world is crucified, is, a deep, habituated apprehension of its unworthiness and insufficiency. As the opposing world must be taken for an enemy, so the promising, alluring world must be taken, as it is, for an empty thing. The life and reign of the world in the unsanctified, lieth first in their too high estimation of it. They think of it as good, and good to them, and as a matter of some considerable worth; and though they will say with their tongues that heaven is better, yet all things considered, they take the world to be more suitable to them, and therefore they desire it more. For heaven is out of sight, and beyond their apprehension and affection, and as they imagine, it is not so certain as the things which they see, and feel, and possess. And therefore they resolve to grasp as much of the creature as they can, and take that which they can get in hand, and then if there be a heaven, they hope they may have their part in it, as well as others. But saving illumination doth put men into another mind. It makes them see, that the invisible things are of greater certainty than the visible, and that a promise without possession, is better security than possession without a promise; and that for the worth and goodness between eternal things and temporal, there can be no comparison. If the world would have been content to have kept its place, and to have borrowed all its honour and esteem from God and glory, as the end for which it must be used and regarded, it might then have had the honour of being serviceable to our salvation, and to our Master's work. But seeing it will needs be a competitor with heaven, it thereby disrobeth itself of its glory, and becometh a vile, contemptible thing: and so must it be esteemed by all the friends of God. A sound believer looks on the world, as the world looked on Christ when he hanged on the cross, not only as a malefactor but as a contemptible thing. And as the world esteemeth

the saints themselves to be hypocrites, deceivers, fools, weak, despised, a spectacle to the world, yea, as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; so must the believer esteem the world, as seeming to be what it is not, as a weak and insufficient thing, as the *περικαθήματα καὶ πάντων περιψήμα*, 1 Cor. iv. 11—13, the very filth of the streets that is swept away, or cast upon the dunghill; or as a thing devoted to death for the averting of an imminent judgment. Paul's judgment is in a prevalent degree the judgment of every gracious soul; "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ;" Phil. iii. 7, 8. Were the world but thus conceived of by a practical judgment, it were half crucified already. If men did verily think that the world is their loss, they would love it less, and less greedily seek after it, than now most do. Gehazi would not have run after Naaman for his money, if he had thought it had been his loss. Achan would not have hidden the forbidden gold, as a treasure, if he had thought it had been his loss. Who would be at so much care and pains for their loss, as worldlings and sensualists are for their delights? And if the judgment did once esteem the world as dung, they would not be so greedy for it, nor put it into their bosoms. Who would fall in love with dung, or dote upon filth or dog's-meat? As the judgment doth esteem it, the affections will be towards it. And they that know not of a better condition, will value this as the best, though common reason will call it vanity. But they that by faith have found out the true felicity, have low and contemptuous thoughts of the world. O what a carcase what a shadow is it in their eyes! What a poor, low thing is it which the sons of men do tire themselves in seeking after! What a dunghill do they wallow in, as if it were a bed of roses! What deformities do they dote upon, as if they were the most real beauties! A toad abhorreth not the company of a toad; but shall not a man abhor it? But we shall have occasion of saying more to this in the application.

3. The third act by which we crucify the world, is a kind of annihilation of it to ourselves; in our conceptions taking

it as a very nothing, so far as it would be something separated from God, or co-ordinate with him. How oft doth the Scripture call it vanity, a dream, a vain show, a shadow, yea, nothing, yea, and less than nothing before God, and lighter than vanity itself; Isai. xl. 17. Psal. lxii. 9. Job vi. 21. The princes of the earth, who are something in the eyes of themselves and others, appear as nothing when God lets out his wrath upon them; Isai. xxxiv. 12. Even as the straw when the fire hath consumed it, or the fairest buildings when it hath turned them to ashes. For though the world be really something, yet, 1. In regard of the effects which it promiseth to seduced worldlings, it may be called nothing. For that which can do nothing for us in our extremity, which hath no power to relieve or satisfy us, which leaveth the soul empty, and deceiveth them that trust it, may well be called nothing in effect: 'In genere boni,' that which can do us no good, is nothing to us. Let a needy soul betake himself to the world for comfort under the burden of sin, for quiet and true peace to a wounded conscience, and you will find it can do nothing. Seek to it for grace or strength against corruptions and temptations, and you will find it can do nothing. Cry to it for succour in the depth of your affliction, and at the hour of death, and try whether it will present you acceptable unto God, and bring your departed souls with boldness to his presence, and you will find that it can do nothing! Whatever it promiseth, and whatever it seemeth to deluded sinners, when you look for any real good from it, you will find it can do nothing: and therefore you may well take it as a mere nothing to you. 2. And 'in esse objectivo' we may make nothing of it, by excluding it from any room in our souls, as to those acts that do not belong to it. 3. And as a separated being, independent as to God, so it is indeed nothing, for there is no such thing: much less as it is a separated good or felicity to man. Annihilate then the world to yourselves. When it would appear to you to be what it is not, and would promise you to do what it cannot, let it be as nothing to you. Conceive of it as of a shadow, or a thing that seemeth to be and is not. Could you once make nothing of it, it would have no power over you, nor any unhappy effects upon you. You would not dote upon a known nothing, nor change your God and glory for nothing. As Job saith of the wicked,

“He openeth his eyes, and he is not;” Job xxvii. 19. so we may say of the world : when we open our eyes, we shall see that it is not : that which before seemed nothing to us, will appear to be all things ; and the world, that seemed all things, will be nothing.

The sum of all that hath been said is this : The opposing world must be apprehended as an enemy to God and us, and so far hated. The glozing world appearing as our felicity, or a competitor with God, must be conceived of as worthless, and contemned : and the world as it would appear as a separated good, being any thing to us, or having any thing for us, out of God, must be annihilated in our conceptions, and taken as nothing.

We are next briefly to shew you, how it is that we are crucified to the world ; having shewed you how the world is crucified to us. And in general the meaning is, that we are as dead or crucified men to it, in regard of those fore-mentioned unjust respects, in which the tempter would present it to us. So that ‘crucified’ here is put for the absence of that action and worldly disposition, which carnal men are guilty of. So that it is a moral, and not a natural death, that is here mentioned ; and observably differeth from a natural in these respects.

1. A natural death destroyeth the very powers or faculties of acting. But a moral death only destroyeth the disposition and action itself, but not any natural power.

2. A natural death is involuntary ; and in itself is neither a virtue nor a vice ; neither morally good or evil. But a moral death is principally in the will itself, and nothing is more voluntary, and so it is the principal virtue or vice. To be dead in sin and to God, is the sum of all evil. And to be dead to sin and the world, in Christ, is the sum of moral good.

3. Natural death hath no degree of life remaining (saving of the separated soul). But moral death may consist with much of the contrary life. For it is denominated from the predominant habits of the soul ; which may stand with much of the contrary habit, though subdued. We cannot therefore gather that Paul was absolutely free from all sin, because he was dead to it, or crucified to the world. For this is a moral death consisting in a conquest of the enemy ; who may be said to be dead, because he is overcome ; and

consisting in the prevalent habits of the soul, which yet may have too much of the remnants of their contraries.

More particularly, 1. If we are crucified to the world, our undue estimation of the world is crucified. We have no idolizing, overvaluing regard to it, (in that measure as we are dead to it). As the world do not regard the works of the Lord, (Psal. xxviii. 5. Jer. v. 12.) so the saints do not regard the things of the world. The life of faith so elevate their spirits, that they are mounted up above the creature, and look not upon the world; or look upon it as a despicable thing. They are above that which is the delight and employment of others; and that which the sensual call felicity, they still call vanity. And as a man's stomach abhorreth that which a dog or swine will greedily devour, so the soul of a believer doth despise and abhor the delights of the ungodly. As pride makes the rich look contemptuously and disregardfully upon the poor, so the holy elevation of believing souls, doth make them look contemptuously and disregardfully upon all the glory of the world. As faith doth bring them up to God, and make him their object and their all, so doth it make them somewhat like him, and minded as he is minded. And as God "regardeth not persons, (Deut. x. 17.) nor accepteth the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, (Job xxxiv. 19.) but is pleased more in the least of his image on the humble, faithful soul, than with all the glittering glory of the world; so is it in their measure with his people. Where they see nothing of God, they feel no substance; but so far as God appeareth to them in any creature, or action, or any means or benefit which they possess, so far they perceive some substance in it. As "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.) so the spiritual man hath shut up his senses to the world, and lost his perception of them, because they are carnally so discerned. The carnal man hath his senses quick in discerning and favouring the things of the flesh, but to the things of the Spirit he is dead and senseless. And contrarily the spiritual man is dead and senseless to the things of the flesh, and hath no savour in those things that are other men's delights; Rom. viii. 5, 6. 10. He tasteth no more sweetness in their pleasures than in a chip. He wonders what they can see or

taste in the things of the world, that they so run after it. To be rich or poor, do but little differ in his eyes. To be high or low is all one to him, considering these things as accommodations to the flesh; though still he valueth any condition according to the respect it hath to God, and so that is the best condition to him that best accommodateth and advantageth him for God's service. He taketh the flesh's interest to be none of his interest; and therefore that which only concerneth the flesh, concerneth not him. And therefore he looketh in this regard upon a high estate or low, as nothing to him. Let God dispose of him as he please, that is God's work and not his. He hath "learned in whatever state he is, therewith to be content. He knows how to be abased, and he knows how to abound; every where, and in all things he is instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;" Phil. iv. 11, 12. If you applaud and honour him, he takes it but as if you breathed on him; at the best it is but a sweeter kind of breath. And if you vilify, and reproach, and unjustly condemn him, he takes it for no great hurt. For "with him it is a very small thing to be judged of man, and at man's bar; for he that judgeth him is the Lord;" 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Nay, what if I said that if you imprison him, threaten him, torment him, yea, put him to death, he doth not much regard it, nor make any great matter of it, so far as he is crucified to the world. How joyfully could Paul and Silas sing in the stocks, when their bodies were sore with scourging? Acts xvi. What a rapture of joyful praises did the apostles break forth into, when they were threatened by the priests and elders? chap. iv. 21. 24. I will add but two more instances, Dan. iii. The three Jews that were threatened with a furnace of fire, are accused for not regarding the king, ver. 12. and their own answer is, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, the God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy Gods;" ver. 16, 17. And sure they that "would not accept of deliverance when they were tortured," Heb. xi. 35. did set little by it in comparison of that better resurrection which they hoped for. As Christ said of satan, "The prince of this world hath nothing in me;" John xiv. 30. so in our mea-

sure, so far as we are dead with Christ, the world hath nothing in us : no interest, no carnal life to work upon, and therefore is unable to do any thing with us. Our undue estimation of the world is crucified. This is the first part.

2. If we are crucified to the world, our inordinate cogitations of the world are crucified. We must not give it that room in our fancies or power over them, as they have with other men. We should not indeed allow the creature one thought either for itself, and terminated finally in itself, nor as separated from God. Much less should we have so frequent and so pleasant or passionate thoughts of it as most have. But of this more in the application.

3. To be crucified to the world, is to have affections dead about worldly things. That which is vile in our estimation, will be ineffectual in our affections. I shall briefly instance in some particulars.

(1.) Our love to the world is crucified, if we be crucified to the world. As this is the great affection which God claimeth for himself, and which he maketh the seat of his most excellent grace ; so is it that which he is most jealous of, and will least allow the creature to partake of ; and the misemployment of it is the greatest sin, as the right employment of it is the greatest duty. " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ;" 1 John ii. 15. This is a plain and flat command. If the world be not apprehended by the understanding to be our good, it will not be embraced by the will, nor be loved. Perhaps you will say, ' Though it be not our chief good, yet it is good, and therefore may be loved, though not chiefly loved.' To which I answer, that in the senses before disclaimed, it is none of our good at all. It hath no goodness to us in it, but the good of a means, which is respective to the end ; and therefore we must have no love to it but that which is due to the means. God therefore being our end, we must love the world only for his sake, as it cometh from him, and leadeth to him. The least love to the world for itself, is idolatrous. As you may not allow another woman the least conjugal affections, though you allow your wife more, without some guilt of unchastity, so you may not in the least measure love the creature for itself, without some guilt of spiritual unchastity. If God must be loved with all the heart,

and soul, and strength, then there is none left for any co-partner whatsoever. When we love any thing but as a means, it is more properly the end that we love in that very act (and therefore some philosophical divines affirm that nothing but the ultimate end is properly loved), so that the love which we give the world in a due subordination to God, is not so properly a love to the world as to God, and therefore it taketh not from God the least part of that which is due to him. But if we love it in the least measure for itself, or with any co-ordinate love, so much as we allow it, is robbed from God.

(2.) Hence followeth (when our love to the world is crucified) that our desires after it is crucified also. Before we thirsted after pleasures, or honours, or riches, but now this thirst is abated; for when we obey the call of Christ (Isa. lv. 1.), and have freely drunk of the living waters, we thirst our former thirst no more (according to the measure in which we partake of him), but his Spirit will be a well of water in us, springing up to everlasting life; John iv. 13, 14. The distempered appetite of a carnal man is so eager after worldly things, that his heart is set upon them, which is called his "minding the things of the flesh;" Rom. viii. 5. But the mortified Christian as such, hath no mind of them. His appetite to them is dead and gone. He cares not for them. Now he perceiveth that they are not good for him, his heart is turned against them.

(3.) When we are crucified to the world, our expectations of good from the world are crucified. Before we looked for much from it; we thought if we had this pleasure, or that honour; if we had such lands, buildings, friends, or provision, then we were well, or at least much better than now we are! O how good did we think that these were for us! And therefore we still lived in hope of more. But when we are crucified to the world, we give up these hopes. We see then that we are deceived. We did but hope for nourishment from a stone. The breasts are dry which we thought would have refreshed and satisfied us. When we see that the world is an empty thing, a cask, a picture, a dream, a shadow, we turn away from it, and look no more after it, but look for content in something else. As a child that seeth a painted apple may be eager of it till he try that it is savourless, and then he careth for it no more. Or if a beautiful

crab deceive him, when he hath set his teeth in it, he casteth it away; so when a Christian findeth the folly of his former expectations, and tasteth the vexations of the creature which he was so greedy of, and withal is acquainted by a lively faith, where he may be better, away go all his expectations from the world; and he promiseth himself no more content or satisfaction in it. This is a notable part of mortification. As it is the hopes of some good, that sets men to work in all endeavours; so take down their hopes, and all the wheels of the soul stand still: If it were not for hope, we say, the heart would break. And therefore when all our hopes from the world are dead, the very heart of the old man is broken, and all his worldly motions cease. Then he saith, 'It is as good to sit still, as labour for nothing. I despair of ever having contentment in the creature. I see it will not pacify any conscience: it will not save me from the wrath to come: it will do nothing for me that is worthy of my regard, and therefore let it go: I will follow it no further: it shall have my heart no more.' Before he had many a promising, delightful thought of the creatures, which he could not reach. He thought with himself, 'If I were but thus placed and settled once; if I had but this or that which I want; if I were but here or there where I would be; if I had but the favour of such or such an one, how happy were I; how well should I be. I would then be content and seek no more.' But when faith hath mortified us to the world, we see that all these were foolish dreams: we knew not what it was that we hoped for; and then we give up all such hopes for ever. Such pleasing thoughts of any worldly thing while you want it, or of any place or condition which you are absent from, and such promises and hopes from any worldly state, or person, or thing, doth manifest that so far you are alive to the world, and is a folly of the same nature with theirs that idolize the world, when they do enjoy it. For one man to say, 'If I had this or that, I were well,' and for another that hath it, to say, 'Now I am well, soul take thy rest,' do both shew the same estimation, and idolatrous love to the world in their hearts; though one of them have the thing which he loves, and the other hath it not. And to be so pleased with the very fancy and conceits of those worldly things which they never had, seems worse than to be pleased with it when they have it.

I pray you lay this well to heart that I say to you. Despair, utter despair of ever being contented or well in the world, or made happy by the world, in whole or in part, is the very life of Christian mortification. It is the nature of a carnal heart, to keep up his worldly hopes as long as possibly he can. If you beat him out from one thing he runs to another; and if he despair of that, he looks after a third, and thus he will wander from creature to creature, till grace convert him, or judgment condemn him. If he find that one friend faileth him, he hopes another will prove more faithful; and if that prove a broken reed, he will rest upon a third. If he have been crossed in his hopes of worldly contentment once, or twice, or ten times, or a hundred times, yet he is in hope that some other way may hit, and some more comfort he may find at last. But when God hath opened a man's eyes to see that the whole world is vanity and vexation, and that if he had it all, it would do him no good at all; and that it is a mere deceitful, empty thing; and when a man is brought to a full and final desperation of ever finding in the world the good that he expected; then, and not till then, is he crucified to the world; and then he can let it go, and care not: and then he will betake himself in good earnest to look after that which will not deceive him.

When a worldling is in utmost poverty or in prison, he may part with all his worldly contentment at the present: but this is not to be crucified to the world. For still he keeps up his former estimation of it, and love to it, and some hope perhaps that yet it may be better with him. Yet, if he should despair of ever being happy in the world, if this proceed not from his disesteem of it, and the change of his affections, but merely because he would have the world, but sees he cannot, this is far from the nature of true mortification.

(4.) If we are crucified to the world, our delight in it is crucified. It seemeth not to us a matter of such worth, as to be fit for our delight. Children are glad of toys, which a wise man hath no pleasure in. To have too sweet contentful thoughts in the creature, and to apprehend it as our good, and to be rejoiced in it, is a sign that so far we are not crucified to it. It is not able to glad a mortified heart, so far as it is mortified; though the love of God that

is manifested by it, may make him glad. And this is it that Paul disclaimeth in my text, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ." If he were the lord of all the honours or wealth of the world, he would not glory in them. If he had all the pleasures that the flesh can desire, he would not glory in them. If he had the common applause of all men, and every one spoke well of him; if he had all things about him suited to a carnal heart's content, yet would he not glory in it. No more than a grave and learned man would glory that he had found a counter or a pin. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;" Jer. ix. 23. "The nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory;" chap. iv. 2. "Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Israel;" Isa. xli. 16. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;" chap. xlv. 25. The world is too low to be the joy of a believer. His higher hopes do cloud and disgrace such things.

And as these forementioned passions in the concupiscible, so also their contraries in the irascible, must be crucified: e. g. (1.) A man that is dead to the world, will not hate or be much displeased with those that hinder him from the riches, or honours, or pleasures of the world. He makes no great matter of it, and taketh it for no great hurt or loss. And therefore rather than study revenge, he can patiently bear it, when they have taken away his coat, if they take away his cloak also. He doth not swell with malice against them that stand in the way of his advancement, or hinder his rising or riches in the world. He will not envy the precedence of others, or seek the disgrace or ruin of them that keep him low. No more than a wise man will hate or seek to be revenged of him that would hinder him from climbing up to the top of a steeple, or that will take a stone or a bush of thorns out of his way.

(2.) A man that is crucified to the world, will not avoid or fly from any duty, though the performance of it cross his worldly commodity, or hazard all his worldly interest. He

seeth not reason enough in worldly losses, to draw him to the committing of sin to avoid them. An unmortified man will be swayed by his worldly interest. That must be no duty to him, which casteth him upon sufferings; and that is no good to him which would deprive him of his sensual good; and that shall be no sin to him, which seemeth to be a matter of necessity, for the securing of his hopes and happiness in the world. Whatever is a man's end, he puts a must upon the obtaining it, and upon all the means without which it will not be attained. I must have God and glory, saith the believer, whatever I want: and therefore I must have Christ, I must have faith, and love, and obedience, whatever I do.' And so saith the sensualist, 'My life, and credit, and safety in the world must be secured, whatever I miss of. And therefore I must avoid all that would hazard or lose them. And I must do that which will preserve them whatever I do.' The worldling thinketh there is a necessity of his being sensually happy; or at least of preserving his life and hopes on earth. But the mortified Christian seeth no necessity of living, much less of any of the sensual provisions, which to others seem such considerable things. And hence it is that the same argument from necessity, draweth one man to sin, and keepeth another most effectually from sin. He that hath carnal ends, doth plead a necessity of the sinful means, by which he may attain them. And he that hath the end of a true believer, doth plead a necessity of avoiding the same sins, which the other thought he must needs commit. For heavenly ends are as much crossed by them as earthly ends are promoted by them. We find a rich man in Luke xviii. 23, that had a great mind to have been a Christian. And if he had lived in our days, when the door is set a little wider open than Christ did set it, there are some that would not have denied him baptism, but would have let him in. But when he heareth that the world must be renounced, and Christ tells him of selling all and looking for a reward in another world, "he goes away sorrowful, for he was very rich." The man would have had pardon and salvation, but he must needs be rich, or at least keep something. And they that are so set upon it, that they must and "will be rich, do fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition;" 1 Tim. vi. 9.

And "he that makes haste to be rich, shall not be innocent;" Prov. xxviii. 20. But the crucified world is a dead and ineffectual thing. It cannot draw a man from Christ or duty. It cannot draw a man into any known sin (so far as he is crucified). It is as Samson, when his hair was cut: its power is gone. Thousands whose hearts were changed by grace, could sell all, and lay the price at the apostles' feet, and could forsake all, and take up their cross and follow a crucified Christ to the death, and could rejoice in tribulation, and glory that they were counted worthy to suffer: though he that was unmortified do go away sorrowful. Worldly interest doth command the religion and life of the unmortified man, because it is the predominant interest in his heart. But it is contrary with the mortified believer. His spiritual interest being predominant, doth rule him as to all the matters of this world.

(3.) If you are crucified to the world, your care for worldly things is crucified. It is not in vain that Christ expressly commandeth his disciples, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on;" Matt. vi. 25. 31. And Phil. iv. 6. "Be careful for nothing." And 1 Pet. v. 7. "Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you." I know this is a hard saying to flesh and blood, and therefore they study evasions by perverting the plain text, and would null and evacuate the express commands of Christ, by squaring them to that carnal interest and reason which they are purposely given to destroy. But you will say, 'Must we indeed give over caring?' I answer, 1. You must be in care about your own duty, both in matters of the first and second table, and how to manage your worldly affairs most innocently and spiritually, and to attain the ends propounded in them by God. But this is none of the care that is now in question; 1 Cor. vii. 32. There is a necessary "caring for the things that belong to the Lord, how to please the Lord," and that even in your worldly business. But 2. You may not care for the creature for itself, nor for the mere pleasing of the flesh. As it may not be loved for itself, so neither may it be cared for, for itself. And 3. When you have used your utmost care or forecast to do your own duty, you may not be anxious or careful about the issue which is God's part to determine of. As God himself appeareth in prosperity or adver-

sity, you may and must have regard unto the issue. But for the thing itself you must not, when you have done your own duty, be any further careful about it. God knoweth best what is good for you, and how much of the creature you are fit to manage, and what condition of body is most suitable to the condition of your soul. And therefore to him must the whole business be committed. When you have committed your seed to the ground, and done your duty about it, you must have no further care at all, which intimateth fears, anxiety, or distrust: though as care is largely taken for regard, you may care and pray for the blessing of God on it, and for your daily bread.

(4.) So far as you are crucified to the world, your worldly sorrows also will be crucified. If you miss of it, you will not be grieved for that miss. For the displeasure of God which an affliction may manifest, you ought to be grieved; but not for the mere loss of the creature for itself. As God in the creature must be loved and delighted in, and not the creature for itself; so it is God's displeasure manifested in the creature that must be our grief. If a man's flesh be dead, you may cut it off, and he never feeleth you: you may cut it, or prick it, and he will not smart. And if you be dead to the world, you will not feel it as others do, when worldly things are taken from you. You will make no great matter of it.

Object. 'But grace doth not make men stocks or stupid, and therefore how can we choose but feel?'

Ans. There is a feeling that is merely natural, and not subject to the command of reason and will; and there is a feeling which is under reason, and is voluntary. The latter only is that I speak of, which grace commandeth. The most gracious man may feel heat and cold, pain and weariness, hunger and thirst, as much as the worst. But the passions of his soul, so far as they are under the command of reason and will, do not feel them as evils to the soul, (so far as he is sanctified). Still observe that I speak of worldly things, as separated from God, in whom only they are good, and in respect to him only the absence of them is evil to the soul. And there is somewhat of the passions that bodily sense can force, perhaps in an innocent Adam. But I speak only of that passion which reason should command.

And so, it is not enough that our care and grief for worldly things be less than that for the things of God: though that much may prove our sincerity (of which more anon), yet that is not all that is our duty. But we should have no care or rational voluntary grief for any creature, but only as it is a means to God, and standeth in a due subordination to him: and so we may have both.

4. Having shewed you what affections are crucified to the world, in the last place I add, that our inordinate labour for it, must be crucified. Christ is as plain and peremptory in this, as in the former, not only commanding us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," (Matt. vi. 33.) but also, "Not to labour for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son will give us," (John vi. 27.) which is not only to be understood that our labour for earth should be less than our labour for heaven, and so comparatively none at all; but further, that we must have no love or desire to the creature for itself, but ultimately for God; so we should not at all seek or labour for the creature for itself, but ultimately for God; and therefore seek and labour for it no further than it is necessary to the pleasing of God, or to our fruition of him. This is the true and plain meaning of such texts.

A man that is truly dead to the world, doth labour for God and not for the world (according to the measure of his mortification) in all that he doth. If he be ploughing, or sowing, or reaping, or threshing, if he be working at his trade in his shop, it is God that he is seeking and labouring for. He doth not stop or take up in the creature. He seeks it still but as a means to God. But an unsanctified man doth never truly seek God for himself at all, no not in his worship, much less in his trade and calling in the world. For God is not his ultimate end; and therefore he cannot love him or seek him for himself. It is flesh-pleasing or carnal felicity that is his end, and therefore he seeketh God for the flesh. When he prayeth to him, when he loveth him, it is but as he is a means to this his carnal felicity, and not as he is himself his chiefest good. Thus you may see what it is to be crucified to the world, and wherein true mortification doth consist.

A few objections are here to be answered, that we may the more profitably proceed.

Object. 1. 'A man may have hunger and thirst in his very sleep, when he cannot refer the creature to God.'

Answ. 1. We speak only of human, that is, moral acts, and such desires as are under the command of the will. 2. A man may habitually refer things to God, when he doth not actually.

Object. 2. How can a man seek God in ploughing, or working in his shop, when these actions are so heterogeneous?

Answ. God made no creature, nor appointed any employment for man, which may not fitly be a means to himself. As all came from God, so all have something of God upon them; and all tend to him from whom they came. There are some means that stand nearer the end, and some are further from it; and yet the most remote are truly means. A man that is but cutting down a tree, or hewing stones out of the quarry, doth as much intend them for the building of his house, as he that is erecting the frame, or placing them in the building. We cannot attain the end without the most remote means, as well as the nearest.

Object. 'We are taught to pray for our daily bread; therefore we may desire it, and labour for it.'

Answ. No doubt of it. But we are taught to pray for it, but as a means to the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will; and therefore only as a means must we desire it, and labour for it; and that for these, and no lower ultimate ends. And therefore the words are such as express only things necessary, "Our daily bread;" that we may perceive it is but as a means to God that we desire it. If our being be not maintained, we are not capable of wellbeing, nor of serving God. And if the means of our being be not continued, our being will not be continued in God's appointed ordinary way. And therefore we pray for the means of our sustentation, that we may be kept in a capacity of the ends of our being.

Object. 'But a man cannot be always thinking on God, and therefore not always intending him as our end, and therefore cannot do all for him.'

Answ. 1. If sin disable us, that is no excuse. 2. A man

may habitually intend an end, which he doth not actually think of. Yea, he may have an actual intention, which yet he doth not observe, because of other more sensible thoughts that are upon his mind. And yet his foresaid intentions may be still effectual to cause him to use the means as means.

For example; a man that hath a journey to go, is not always thinking of the end of it, by an actual observed intention in every step of his way; but perhaps may be much of the way taken up with thoughts and discourse of other things, and yet he doth truly intend his journey's end, in every step of his way, and use every step as a means to that end. And so is it with a true Christian in the work of God, and the way to heaven.

Object. 'But may we not use the creatures for delight, as well as for necessity? and is it not so commonly resolved?'

Answ. The word necessity is taken either strictly for that which we cannot be without; and so there is no doubt of it. Or largely, for that which is useful to the end. And for delights, some of them are necessary, that is, useful means to our ultimate end; and these must not be opposed to things necessary; but may be used because necessary. As any thing which truly tendeth to recreate, revive, or cheer the spirits for the service of our Master. But no other delight is lawful. To esteem our fleshly delight for itself, and the creature for that delight, and so to use it, is mere sensuality, and the great sin which sanctification cureth in the soul. If delight itself be desired truly but as a means to God, then the creature, the more remote means, may be used for that delight, as its next end; but not else.

Object. 'But what man living is such as you here describe? Is there any that are thus crucified to the world, as to have no separated esteem of it, or thoughts or care of it; or love, or desire, or the rest of these affections?'

Answ. It is one thing to inquire what we are, and another what we ought to be, and should be if we were perfect. We ought to be such as I have mentioned, but we are not such in perfection yet; but only in sincerity. And how that sincerity may be known, I have elsewhere explained. In a word, In a perfect soul there is no interest but God's.

In a sincere soul God's interest is the highest and greatest. In a perfect man God hath the whole heart; and in an upright man he is nearer to the heart than any thing else. In a perfect man there is a perfect subjection to God; and in an upright man there is none hath dominion but God; he is the highest, and his rule prevaieth in the main, though some things that rebel are not perfectly subdued.

Object. 'But I find that the most of my passions are stirred more sensibly about earthly, than heavenly things. How then can I say that I am crucified to the world?'

Answ. In point of duty all that passion that is to be commanded by reason, should be mortified, as is abovesaid. But when you go to the trial of your states, in the point of sincerity, it is hard trying by the passions; and you must rather do it by your estimation and your will, as I have discovered more fully in a Treatise of Peace of Conscience.

II. Having shewed you what it is to have the world crucified to us, and to be crucified to the world, I am next to shew you how this is done by the cross of Christ. And here I must distinctly shew,

I. What the cross, as suffered by Christ himself, hath done to the crucifying of the world to us.

II. What the same cross, as believed on and considered by us, doth towards it.

III. And what the cross of Christ which we ourselves bear in conformity to his sufferings, doth towards it. Of all which briefly.

I. It is not only his crucifixion, but the whole humiliation of Christ, which is in this and other Scriptures called his cross; the whole being denominated, from the most eminent part, as was touched before. And there are five notable blows that the world hath received by the suffered cross of Christ.

1. One is, that Christ himself, in his own person, hath perfectly crucified and conquered the world, so that we have a victorious head, and the world is now a conquered thing. It assaulted him from his birth to his death, and still he overcame. It assaulted him by fair means and by foul, by frowns and smiles, by alluring baits and persecuting storms, and still it was overcome. The threatenings and persecutions could never draw him to the committing of a sin. The

enticing offers of it could never bring him to an inordinate esteem of it, nor abate the least of his love to God. In his great combat in the wilderness he was assaulted both ways. Hunger could not make him tempt God, or distrust. The kingdoms and glory of the world were despised by him, when they were the matter of his temptation. He would not have so much as a settled habitation, nor any worldly pomp or splendour, that so he might shew that he contemned it by his actions. If he had set by it, he could soon have mended his condition. When the people would have made him a king, he passed away from them; for he would not be a king of the people's making, nor have any power or dignity which they could give. He came not to receive honour of men, but to give salvation to men. When Peter would have persuaded him to favour himself, as savouring the things of man, and not of God, Christ calleth him satan, and bids him get behind him. If he will do the work of satan, he shall have the name of satan, and the same words of rebuke that satan had. Even in their hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53.), they could do nothing that might make the least breach in his perfection. And when they boasted of their power to crucify him or release him, (John xix. 10), they could not boast of their power to draw him to the smallest sin. Yea, upon the cross did he consummate his conquest of the world, when it seemed to have conquered him; and he crucified the world, when it was crucifying him; and he gave it then the deadly wound. And there did he openly make a show of the principalities and powers which he had spoiled, and there did he triumph over them, while they mistakingly triumphed over him; Col. ii. 14, 15.

If you say, What is all this to us? I answer, When the world is once conquered, the heart of it is broken. And when your Head hath overcome it, there is a great preparation made for our victory. Else would he not have said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" John xvi. 33. For as the consequence is good, "Because I live, ye shall live also," (chap. xiv. 19.) so it would hold, Because I have overcome the world, ye shall overcome it also. Yea, as it is said of his works, "Greater works than these shall ye do," (ver. 12.) so is it said of our conquest, "In all these

things we are supervictors, or more than conquerors through him that hath loved us ;” Rom. viii. 37.

2. Another wound that the world hath received by the cross of Christ by him suffered, is this. By it, satisfaction is made to God for the sin that the world had enticed man to commit, and so ‘quoad pretium,’ the victory which the world had formerly obtained over us is nulled, and its captives rescued, and we are cured of the deadly wounds which it had given us. For “he healeth all our diseases,” (Psal. ciii. 3.) and his stripes are the remedy by which we are healed ; Isa. liii. 5. So that it is a vanquishing of the world, when Christ doth thus nullify its former victories. For thus he began to “lead captivity itself captive, which at his resurrection and ascension he did more fully accomplish ; Psal. lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8.

3. Another most mortal wound which the world received by the cross of Christ, was this. By his cross did Christ purchase that glorious kingdom, which being revealed and propounded to the sons of men, doth abundantly disgrace the world as a competitor. If there had been no greater good revealed to us, or the revelation had been obscure and insufficient, or no assurance of it given us, then might the world have easily prevailed. For he that hath no hopes of greater, will take up with this. And he that looketh not for another life, will make as much of the present as he can. When the will of a man is the fort that is contended for, the assault must be made by allurement, and not by force. The competition therefore is between good and good ; and that which appeareth the greatest good to us, will carry it, and have admittance. If God had not set a greater good against the world, it would have been every man’s wisdom and duty to have been worldlings. But when he revealeth to us another world of infinite value, yea, when he offereth us the fruition of himself, this turneth the scales with the wise men in a moment, and shameth all competitors whatsoever. Now it is the cross of Christ that opened the kingdom of heaven to all true believers, which sin had before shut up against all mankind. This mars the markets of the world : it is nothing worth to them that have tasted of the blessedness of this kingdom. Were it not for this, the temptations of the world and flesh might prevail. What should we say to them ? or how should we repulse them ?

Reason would say, It is better to have a small and unsatisfactory good than none. But now we have enough to say against any such temptation. One argument from the everlasting kingdom is sufficient (where grace causeth a right apprehension of it) to confound all the temptations, by which the enemies of our happiness can assault us. What! shall we prefer a mole-hill before a kingdom? a shadow before the substance? an hour before eternity? nothing before all things? vanity and vexation before felicity? The world is now silenced; it hath nothing to say, which may take with right reason. It must now creep in at the back-door of sense, and bribe our brutish part to befriend it, and to entertain it first, and so to betray our reason, and lead it into the inner rooms. The cross of Christ hath set up such a sun as quite darkeneth the light of worldly glory. Who will now play so low a game, that hath an immortal crown propounded to him? Though earth were something, if there were no better to be had, yet it is nothing when heaven stands by. This therefore is the deadly blow by which the world is crucified by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Another mortal wound that the cross of Christ hath given it, is this. The cross hath purchased for us that Spirit of power, and all those ordinances and helps of grace, by which we ourselves in our own persons may actually conquer and crucify the world, as Christ did before us. His cross is the meritorious cause of his following grace. And as he hath there procured our justification, so also our sanctification, by which the world is renounced by us and condemned. There shall a virtue flow from the cross of Christ, that shall give strength to all his chosen ones, to go on and conquer, and tread the world, and all its glory under their feet, and by the leaves of this tree, which seemeth dead to a carnal eye, the nations shall be healed. And thus by it the world is crucified.

5. Lastly, by the cross of Christ, a pattern is given us for our imitation, by which we may learn how to condemn and so crucify the world. "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who

when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously ;" 1 Pet. ii. 20—23. " Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus—that made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant—and humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ;" Phil. ii. 5—7. " Let us therefore lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God ;" Heb. xii. 1, 2. This leads us to the next.

11. Having shewed you how the cross, as suffered by Christ, doth crucify the world ; we are next to shew you, how that same cross, as believed in and considered, doth crucify it to us.

They that look only to the merit of the cross, and overlook the objective use of it to the soul, do deceive themselves, and deprive themselves of the full efficacy of it ; and deal like a foolish patient, that thinketh to be cured by commending the medicine, or by believing that it hath virtue to cure his disease, when in the mean time he lets it lie by him in the box, and never taketh it, or applieth it to himself. The believing meditation of the cross of Christ, doth give the world these deadly wounds :

1. It bringeth us under the actual promise of the Spirit. For though there be a work of the Spirit, which causeth us to believe, before our actual faith in nature, yet the further gift of the Spirit for mortification, is promised upon condition of our faith. And upon the performance of that condition, we have a right to the thing promised. It is by faith that we fetch strength from Christ, for the conquest of this and all other enemies. If we could believe, these mountains would be cast into the sea ; and all things are possible to us, if we could believe ; Mark ix. 23.

2. The believing meditation of the cross of Christ, doth make us apprehensive of the vanity and enmity of the world, and so doth kill our esteem of it, and affection to it. For when we consider how little Christ did set by it, and how he made it his work professedly to condemn it, this will tell us how to think of it ourselves. For doubtless the judgment

of Christ was true. He was able to discern between good and evil: if it had been valuable, he would have valued it. He would not have contemned it, if it had not been contemptible. He could have had better usage in the world, if he had desired it, and thought it meet. But he would shew us by his example as well as by his doctrine, how to judge of it, and what to expect from it. If you saw the wisest man in the world tread a thing under feet in the dirt, or throw it away, you would think it were a thing of no great worth.

When you are tempted to set too much by your credit, and to sin against God for the esteem of men, remember that Christ "made himself of no reputation;" Phil. ii. 7. And can your reputation be less than none? How did he value his honour with men, that gave his cheeks to be smitten, his face to be spit upon, his head to be crowned with thorns, and his body to be arrayed contemptuously like a fool, and at last to be hanged as a contemned thing among malefactors on the cross; to be reviled by those that passed by, and by him that suffered with him? Learn here of him that all must learn of, how far to set by your honour in the world.

Are you tempted to set by the riches and full provision or possessions of the world? Remember how Christ set by them; when he might have had all things, and refused to have a place whereon to lay his head. When "he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich;" 2 Cor. viii. 9. And the best of his servants have followed him in this course, to whom he would have given more of the world, if he had seen it best for them. For when they had dishonour, they had honour with it and by it; when they had evil report, they had also good; when they were poor, they made many rich; and "having nothing, possessed all things;" 2 Cor. vi. 8. 10.

When your flesh would have its pleasure, remember him that pleased not his flesh; but submitted it to hunger, and thirst, and weariness, to fasting, and watching, and praying whole nights; and at last to scourgings, and buffeting, and crucifying. When your appetites must needs be pleased in meats and drinks, remember him that had gall and vinegar given him to drink. When your bodies would be set out with such apparel as may make you seem most comely in the eyes of others, remember him that wore a seamless coat,

and was hanged naked on the cross for your sakes. When you are tender of every little hurt or suffering of your flesh, though in a way of duty, remember him that gave his hands and feet to be nailed, and his side to be pierced to death for you. When you are ashamed to be reviled for welldoing, remember him that "despised the shame;" Heb. xii. 2. And thus as the sight of the brazen serpent did cure them that were stung in the wilderness, so the believing views of a crucified Christ, may get out the poison of worldly delusions from your souls.

3. The believing thoughts of the cross of Christ will make us apprehensive also of our duty, in contemning the world in conformity to Christ. For though we are not bound to be crucified as Christ was, unless God specially put us upon it; nor bound to live without house or home in voluntary, chosen poverty, as Christ did (because there were some special reasons for his sufferings, that are not for ours), yet are we all bound to mortify the flesh, and contemn the world in imitation of him, and to submit to what suffering God shall impose on us. And in the example of Christ's cross, this duty must be observed.

III. The next thing to be declared is, How the cross which we ourselves do suffer in obedience and conformity to Christ, and for his sake doth crucify the world to us and us to the world. That the bearing of this cross is necessary to all that will be Christ's disciples; yea, the daily bearing of it is plain; Luke ix. 23. xiv. 27. Matt. x. 38. Two ways doth this tend to the crucifying of us to the world.

1. It doth more sensibly convince us of the vanity and enmity of the world, than any mere doctrine or distant examples and observations could have done. I confess we see so much of the world's deceit of others, that might satisfy a reasonable man that it is in vain. But the flesh doth draw us into a participation of its brutishness; and reason will not see the light. But the cross doth convince even the flesh itself, the grand deceiver. When the malice of wicked men lets fly at us, and the world do spit in our faces, as they did in Christ's; when we are made a common by-word and derision, and become as the filth of the world to them, and the offscouring of all things; when we have fears within and troubles without; and the sorrows of death lay

hold upon us, and enemies compass us round about; O how effectually will this convince us that the world is vain, and worse than vain! Who will look for happiness from a known enemy and tormentor. When we have Job's messengers of sad tidings, and troubles are multiplied; when pain and anguish seize upon our bodies, and grief hath taken up its dwelling in our very flesh and bones, who then will admire or dote upon the world? Who will not then cry out against it, as vanity and vexation? When friends abuse one another, they will fall out for the time, though they turn not enemies. And even the wicked, when they suffer in the world, will speak hardly of it, though the friendship of it still dwell in their sensual dispositions. How much more will the enmity be increased in the saints, when the world doth use them as its enemies, and spit out the bitterest of their malice against them? If we have any thoughts of reconciliation with the world, God useth to suffer it to buffet and abuse us, that strokes and smart may maintain the enemy, if nothing else will serve to do it.

Believe it, Christians, God doth not permit your sufferings in vain. He seeth how apt you are to dote upon the world, and how dangerous it will prove to you, if you be not delivered from the snares of this deceiver: and therefore he had rather that the world should make you smart awhile; than undo you for ever; and that it should buffet you, than befool you out of your felicity. The blows which the world giveth you, do light upon itself: as it crucified itself in crucifying Christ, so doth it in crucifying his people. It killeth itself by your calamities: and if it deprive you of your lives, you will then begin to live: but the death which it bringeth on itself, is such as hath no resurrection. If it kill you, you shall live again, yea, live by that death: but thereby it will so kill itself, as never to live again in you. The cross is a happy teacher of many excellent truths; but of nothing more effectually, than of the contemptibleness of the world. If it turn our breath into groans, we shall groan against it, and groan to be delivered, "desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;" 2 Cor. v. 2. We shall cry to heaven against this task-master, and our cries will come before God, and procure our deliverance. The world gets nothing by its hard usage of the saints: it

maketh a cross for the crucifying of itself, and turneth their hearts more effectually against it.

2. And as it thus declareth itself contemptible, and crucifieth itself to us, so doth it exercise us in patience, and awaken us to deeper considerations of its own vanity, and drive us to look after better things : it forceth us also to seek out to God, and to see that all our dependance is on him, and draweth forth our holy desires and other graces ; and thus it doth crucify us also to the world. It makes us go into the sanctuary, and consider of the end ; how the wicked are set in slippery places, and that at last it will go well with the just. It teacheth us to consider, that while “the Lord is our portion, we have ground enough of hope, for he is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him : it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord : it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him : he putteth his mouth in the dust ; if so be there may be hope : he giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him ; he is filled full with reproach : for the Lord will not cast off for ever ; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies ;” Lam. iii. 24—33. “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed ;” Rom. v. 3—5. “For if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified together : and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” And “we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body ;” Rom. viii. 17, 18, 23. When Paul suffered for Christ the loss of all things, he accounted them dung that he might win Christ ; that he might know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death ; Phil. iii. 8, 10. He rejoiced in his sufferings, and filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body’s sake, which is the church ; Col. i. 24. And thus was he crucified with Christ and yet lived ; yet not he, but Christ lived in him ; and the life which he lived in the flesh, he lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him ; Gal. ii. 20.

III. Having thus shewed you how the cross of Christ doth crucify the world to us, and us to the world, I am next to give you the proofs of the point, that thus it is with true believers. But because the text itself is so plain, and it is so fully proved on the by in what is said already, and I have been somewhat long on the explication, I shall refer the rest of the Scripture proofs to the application, where we shall have further occasion to produce it; and I shall now only add the argument from experience. To the saints themselves I need not prove it; for they feel it in their own hearts: in their several measures they feel in themselves a low esteem of all things in this world, and a high esteem of God in Christ. They would count it a happy exchange to become more poor and afflicted in the world, and to have more of Christ and his Spirit, and of the hopes of a better world; to have more of God's favour, though more of man's displeasure. It is God that they secretly long for and groan after from day to day; it is God that they must have, or nothing will content them. They can spare you all things else, if they might have him.

And for those that never felt such a thing in themselves, they may yet perceive that it is in others.

I. You see that there are a people that seek more diligently after heaven than earth, that are hearing the word of God, which instructeth them in the matters of salvation, and are praying for the things of eternal life, when you are labouring for the world. You see that there are a people that seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and labour most for the food that perisheth not, and are about the one thing necessary, which sheweth that they have chosen the better part.

II. And you see that there is a people that can let go the things of the world when God calls for them; that can be liberal according to their power to any pious or charitable uses; that will rather suffer in body or estate, even the loss of all, than they will wilfully sin against God, and hazard his favour.

You have read or heard of multitudes that have suffered martyrdom for Christ, undergoing many kind of torments, and death itself, because they would not sin against him. All these examples, together with the frequent affirmations of the Scriptures, may assure you that thus it is with true

Christians. The world is crucified to them, and they to the world.

IV. I am next to give you the reasons of the necessity of this crucifixion, the most of which also, for brevity sake, I shall reserve to the application, and at present lay down these two or three briefly.

1. The world is every man's carnal idol, and God cannot endure idolatry; to see his creature set up in his stead, and rob him of his esteem and interest, and be loved, honoured and served before him; and to see such contemptible things be taken as Gods, while God himself stands by neglected, he will not, he cannot endure this. Either grace shall take down the idol, or judgment and hell shall plague the idolator; for he hath resolved that he will not give his glory to another; Isai. xlii. 8. xlviii. 11. All sin is hateful to God, and none but the cleansed perfect soul shall stand before him in the presence of his glory; nor any in whom iniquity hath dominion, shall stand accepted in the presence of his grace: but yet no particular sin is so hateful to him as idolatry is. For this is not only a trespassing against his laws, but a disclaiming or rejecting his very Sovereignty itself. To give a prince irreverent language, and to break his laws, is punishable; but to pull him out of his throne, and set up a scullion in it, and give him the honour and obedience of a king, this is another kind of matter, and much more intolerable. The first commandment is not like the rest, which require only obedience to particular laws in a particular action; but it establisheth the very relations of sovereign and subject, and requires a constant acknowledgment of these relations, and makes it high treason against the God of heaven in any that shall violate that command. Every crime is not treason: it is one thing to miscarry in a particular case, and another thing to have other gods before and besides the Lord, the only God. Now this is the sin of every worldling: he hath taken down God from the throne in his soul, and set up the flesh and the world in his stead; these he valueth, and magnifieth, and delighteth in; these have his very heart, while God that made it and redeemed him, is set light by. And do you think that this is a sin to be endured? It is a more horrid thing to wish that God were not God, than to wish that heaven and earth were destroyed or turned again to nothing. He that would kill a

man deserveth death; what then deserveth he that would destroy all the world? that would pull the sun out of the firmament, or set all the world on fire, if it were in his power? Yet is not all this so bad as to wish that God should lose his Godhead: and what less doth that man do that would have his prerogative given to the creature, and so would have the creature to be God? If God be not the chief good, he is not God. And if he be not chiefly to be esteemed and loved, he is not the chief good. What then doth that man do, but deny God to be God, that denieth him his highest esteem and love? And certainly he that giveth it to any creature, denieth it to God; for there can be but one chief, and but one God. They take him down therefore as much as in them lieth, that set up another. So also, if God be not the Sovereign ruler of all, he is not God. And therefore can be but one sovereign. What less then do they do, that deny him his sovereignty, than deny him to be God? And he that maketh the flesh or world his sovereign, denieth God to be his sovereign; because there can be but one; especially seeing also that their commands are contrary. I beseech you therefore, sirs, be not so unwise as to think that this mortification or crucifying of the world is only the perfection, or higher pitch of some believers, and not the common state of all. Do not imagine that yourselves, or any other can be true Christians without it. You may as well think that that man should be saved that is a flat atheist, and denieth God, and renounceth him, as that a worldling should be saved: and he that is not dead to the world is a worldling. If any one piece of reformation be essential to a true Christian, it is this. It is as possible for a Turk, or an infidel to be saved, as one that is not dead to the world; yea, the case of these is more desperate, if more can be; for they have not the like means of information (ordinarily) as our worldly professors have. What can any persecutor or idolater do more, than set against God, and set up his enemies? And so doth every worldling, while he denieth God his esteem and chiefest love, and giveth it to the pleasures and profits of this life. I beseech you be not so weak as to dream, that God is nothing but a bare name or title, or that you deny not God, if you refuse not to call him God; or that none are atheists that speak God fair, and give him all his titles; or that

none are impious that give him good words. It is the thing and not the bare words, the description of God (such as we are capable of) and not bare names, that we must inquire of. If you will call your prince by all his royal titles, but will set another in the throne, and give him the rule over you, and obey him alone, which of these is it that you take indeed for your prince? "If I be a Father (saith God), where is mine honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 16. Many "profess that they know God, that in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient;" Tit. i. 16. God is not taken indeed for your God, if he be not taken for your chief good and happiness, and have not the chief of your desire and love; and if he be not taken for your absolute Sovereign, and have not the subjection and obedience of your souls. You may easily see then, that it is not meet, it is not possible, that an unmortified person, or a worldling can be saved. For if they shall be saved that would have God to be no God, then no man should be damned; for there cannot be a worse man than these. Nay, if he be not God, how should he save them, or how should he make them happy, if he be not their chiefest good?

If God should cease to be God, the world and all things would cease to be. For if the first cause cease, the effects must all cease. And if the ultimate end cease, the means, and all use of means must cease. And as the cessation of God, as the first Efficient, would destroy all natural being, so the cessation of God, as the ultimate end, would destroy all moral good whatsoever. Other sins destroy some part or branch of moral good; but the sin of idolatry, the violation of the first commandment, the taking to ourselves some other god, this doth at once subvert all goodness, and destroy the very being of morality itself.

Sirs, I am afraid many, yea, most among us, have not well considered the nature of worldly mindedness, or the greatness of the sin of valuing and loving the creature before God. If they did, it would not be a sin of so good repute among us, but would have contracted more odium before this time than it hath done. There are many sins far smaller than this, that men are ashamed for, and that men are hanged for. But we must not judge by outward appearances, nor make the judgment of the sinner himself to be the rule by which to discern the greatness or smallness of

the sin. A worldling, a fleshly minded man, an unmortified man, that is not dead to the world; all these are terms that are proper to men in a state of damnation under the curse and wrath of God, and are equipollent terms, with "a child of the devil." O how the devil hath deluded multitudes, by making them think that this mortification is some higher pitch of grace than ordinary, but not essential to the life of grace itself; and therefore that a man may be saved without it: when they may as well think to be saved, if they defy the God of heaven, if they despise the Lord that bought them, and if they renounce salvation itself, for indeed so they do. It must needs be that God must look first and chiefly to his own interest, in all his works, even in the collation of his freest grace. And therefore he will be glorified in all his saints, and no man shall have salvation dividedly from his honour. He doth not bring men to heaven to hate and contemn him, but to love and praise him; and he will fit them for that work, before they come thither, and make them love and praise him initially on earth, before they come to do it in heaven. And therefore he will make them contemn all those things that stand in competition with him, and hate all that stands against him.

II. I have shewed you the necessity of crucifying the world, as from God's interest, which the world doth contradict; I shall next shew it you from your own interest. And in these conjunct considerations it will appear, 1. The world is not your happiness. 2. The world is occasionally, through the corruption of our nature, a great enemy to your happiness. 3. God only is your happiness. 4. God is not fully to be enjoyed in this world. 5. It is by knowing, loving, and delighting in him as God that he is to be enjoyed to make us happy. 6. As therefore it is impossible to have two ultimate ends, two chief goods, and to enjoy them both; so it is impossible, that God and the world should both have our chiefest estimation and affection. All this set together, doth demonstrate the necessity of being crucified to the world, unless we will renounce our own felicity.

1. For the first proposition, That the world is not your happiness; I think all your tongues will readily confess it, I would your hearts would do so too. Do you think that God doth envy you your happiness, or that he would take

the world from you, because he esteemeth it too good for you? No, it is because he pitieth your self-deceit, when he seeth you take that for your happiness that is not; and because he hath far better things to bestow. If the world were as good for you as you take it to be, and had that in it to satisfy you, as you may imagine it to have, you might keep it, and much good might it do you; for God would not go about to take it from you. He that made you to be happy, doth not grudge you that which should procure it. Doubtless if he did not see that it is vanity, and that you have made a wrong choice, and do mistake your mark, he would never trouble you in a worldly course, nor call you off. But it is because he seeth your folly and deceit, and wisheth you much better. Woe to you that ever you were born, if you have no better happiness than the world can afford you. Is it not necessary then that you discern your error, and be brought into your right way, and spend not your time and pains for nothing? If God should let you alone to catch at this shadow, and please yourselves with worldly toys, till the time of grace were passed; and then let you see that you were befooled, when it is too late; you would then be left to a fruitless repentance, and to the sense of that unhappiness which you chose to yourselves.

2. And that the world is an enemy to your happiness, may appear two ways. First, in that it deceitfully pretendeth to be your happiness, when it is not; and so would turn away your hearts from that which is. Secondly, in that by allurements or discouragements, it is always hindering you in the way to life, and is a snare to you continually in all that you do. And is it not necessary to your salvation that you be delivered from the enemies of your salvation? and freed from such perilous snares? Can you conquer while you are conquered? And if the world be not crucified to you, it doth conquer you: for its victory is upon your will and affections: and if it conquer you, it will condemn you. To be servants to the world, is to be servants to sin: and "the servants of sin are free from righteousness," Rom. vi. 20. and free from Christ, and free from salvation. A miserable freedom!

3. The following propositions I shall speak of together. That God only is our happiness and chief good, I need not prove to any that indeed believeth him to be God. That

salvation consisteth in the fruition of this happiness, is past doubt. And as sure is it that God is not fully enjoyed in this world ; much less in the creature, when it is loved for itself, and not esteemed as a means to him. All that believe a life after this, do surely believe that there is our felicity. And lastly, that the soul doth enjoy its own felicity, by knowing, and loving, and delighting in its object, is also past doubt. So that you may see that a worldly state of mind is in itself inconsistent with a state of salvation. To be saved is to have the blessed vision of God, and to love him and delight in him perfectly to everlasting. And can you do this, when you love and delight in the world above him, or in opposition to him ? Would you have God to save you, and yet not to take off your affections from the world to himself ? That were to save you, and not to save you ; to feed you by that which is not food ; to comfort you by that which cannot comfort. If a worldling would be saved, and not be mortified, either he speaks he knows not what, but plain nonsense or contradictions, or else he meaneth one of these two things : either that he would have a heaven of worldly riches, or honours, or fleshly pleasures (there is no such to be had) ; or else, that he would have the world as long as he can, and have heaven when he can keep the world no longer, and so would have the world crucified to him, when there is no such world, or when he is taken from it. But as, 1. No man can truly desire future grace and holiness, that doth not desire it at the present, this being rather an unwilling submission to it, as a tolerable evil, than a true desire of it, as a certain good. So 2. God hath determined that this life only shall be the way, and that the end : here only must we use the means ; and there must we partake of the success of our endeavours. You may better expect that God should give you a crop at harvest, who refused to plough and sow your land ; or that your children should be men, before they are born ; than that he should be your happiness in the life to come, if you finally reject him in this life, and choose to yourselves a secular happiness. Such as you now make choice of, such and no other shall you have. Heaven and earth were set before you. You knew that earthly happiness was short ; if yet you would choose it, think not to have heaven too ; for if you do, you will prove deceived at the last.

The Uses.

V. Beloved hearers, I suppose you will give me leave to take it for granted, that you are all the rational creatures of God, made subject to him, and capable of enjoying him, and such as must be happy or miserable for ever; as also that you are all unwilling to be miserable, and willing to be happy; and that this life is the time for the use of those means on which your everlasting life dependeth; and that judgment will turn the scales at last, as grace or sin shall turn them now. I hope also that I may suppose that you are agreed that Christianity is the only way to happiness, and consequently that you are all professed Christians. And one would think that where men are so far satisfied of the end, and of the way, we might conceive great hopes of their sincerity and salvation. But when we see that men's lives do nullify their professions, and that while they look towards God, they row towards the world; and while they hope for heaven, their daily travel is towards hell; and while they plead for Christ, they work against him; our hopes of them are turned to necessary lamentation. But how comes this to pass that reasonable men, yea men reputed wise and learned, yea many that seem religious to others and to themselves, should be so shamefully overseen, in a matter that so concerneth their everlasting state? As far as I am able to discover, the causes of this calamity are these two.

I. One part of the professed Christians of the world, understand not what Christianity is, and so profess but the empty name, when indeed the thing itself which is in their conception, and which they mean in that profession, is nothing like to true Christianity.

II. The other part of miscarrying professors, though they do conceive of the Christian religion as it is, yet not with an apprehension intensively answerable to the thing they apprehend; though their conceptions of the Christian verities have a moral truth in them, it being not false but true which they conceive; yet there is no firmness and solidity in the act, and so they do not effectually apprehend them. Nothing more easy, more common and more dangerous, than to make a religion either of names and words, which he that useth doth not understand; or of mere speculations and su-

perfcial conceits, which never became practical, habituate and predominant; nor were the serious, effectual apprehensions of the man. A right object, and a sincere and serious act, do essentially constitute the Christian's faith. If either be wanting, it is not that faith, whatever it may pretend to be. Nothing but the Gospel objects will suffice to a man's salvation, were it never so firmly apprehended. And nothing but a firm and serious belief of those objects, will make them effectual, or saving to the believer. Were we able to cure the two forementioned defects, and to help you all to these two requisites, we should make no question but you would all be saved. We cannot expect that men should let go their sensual delights, till they hear of somewhat better to be had for them, and till they firmly and heartily give credit to the report.

And because the matter before us in my text is fitted to both these needful works, and containeth those very truths which must rectify you in both these points, I shall draw them forth, and distinctly apply them hereunto.

Use 1. And in the first place you are here informed that the cross of Christ, is the crucifier of the world. Which containeth in it these two parts, which make up the point: 1. That this is the use of the cross, and one great end of the doctrine of Christianity, to crucify the world to us, and us to the world. 2. That where the cross of Christ and his doctrine are effectual, this work is always actually done: in all true Christians the world is thus crucified.

O that these truths were as plainly or truly transcribed upon your hearts, as they are plainly and truly contained in my text!

1. For the first, That this is the end of Christ crucified, and of his doctrine, I shall briefly shew, 1. The necessity of this information. And 2. The certain truth of it.

1. Both the commonness and the dangerousness of erring in this point, do shew the necessity of this information. It is not only the contemners of religion, but also too many that go among us for very godly men, that know not where their happiness lieth, nor what the Christian religion is. Almost all the apprehensions which they have of happiness, are sensual; as if it were but a freedom from sensible punishments, and the possession of some delights of which they have merely sensual conceits. And so they think of Christ

as one that came to free them from such punishments, and help them to such a happiness as this. And as for the true knowledge and fruition of God, in love and heavenly delights, they look upon these either as insignificant names or terms, or as certain appurtenances and fruits of religion, which we ought to have, but may possibly be without, though we be true believers. A confidence that Christ hath freed them from torments, and made them righteous by imputation of his obedience unto them, they take to be all that is essential to their Christianity. And the rest they call by the name of good works: which, if it be not with them a term of as low importance as the name of 'Works' alone, or 'Works of the law,' is taken to be in Paul's Epistles, yet at least they take it for that which doth not constitute their religion. So that true sanctification is either not understood, or taken to be of less necessity than it is. A man that makes a great deal of talk and stir about religion, and is zealous for his opinions and pious compliments, goes current with many for a true believer, though the interest of his flesh and of the world be as near and dear to him in this way of religiousness, as other men's is to them in a way of more open, professed sensuality.

And is it possible for a man to be a Christian indeed, that so far mistaketh the very nature and ends of Christianity itself? It is not possible. By what is said already, and will be by and by, it is evident that this is a damning error, for any man to feign a Christianity to himself that excludeth mortification, or is separable from it, in a capable subject. When men look at a predominant fleshly interest, or worldly mind, as they do at some particular sin, consistent with true faith: I say, this is an error about the very essence of Christianity, and which hazards their salvation.

2. And that it is the end of the cross of Christ, and his doctrine, to crucify the world to us, and to sanctify us to God, I have already manifested in part, and shall now further manifest.

1. It is the end of Christ, and his cross and doctrine, to recover God's interest in the souls of men: but it is by mortification, as a part of true sanctification, that God's interest in men's souls is recovered. Therefore, &c. As God could have no lower ultimate end than himself in our creation, so neither in our redemption. Christ himself as Me-

diator, is but a means to God who is our end ; he is the way to the Father, "and no man cometh to the Father but by him ;" John xiv. 6. He is the Truth that revealeth the Father ; and the Sun of the world, "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world ;" John i. 9. revealing to us both the end and means ; that as there is no light in the earth, but what is communicated by the sun, which enlighteneth some by the moon at midnight, and some by its direct approaching light, at the break of day, before they see the sun itself, and others by its glorious rays when it is risen, and visible to them, and hath also in itself an objective sufficiency to enlighten those that shut their eyes, or want eyesight by which they should receive it : even so is Christ the Sun of the redeemed world, which actually affordeth all that light to all which they do possess ; even some (to all that have the use of reason) which hath a tendency to recovery ; and he hath an objective sufficiency to the saving illumination of those that through their own fault are never so illuminated. The pure Godhead is the beatifical light to be enjoyed for felicity. The Mediator is the mediate light, to shew us the way to God. And in these two consisteth life eternal ; to know God the beginning and end, who himself hath no beginning or end ; and to know Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, to recall us to himself ; John xvii. 3. Whether he that is now to us 'Mediator acquisitionis,' will also hereafter be 'Mediator fruitionis,' and whether the glorified do only see the Godhead in the glass of the glorified body of Christ, and of the most glorious effects which then they shall partake of, or also shall immediately behold it in itself, and see God's essence, face to face, I shall not presume to determine, while Scripture seems so silent, and learned conjectures are so much at odds. But as he is the redeeming, restoring Mediator, it is that we speak all this while of Christ : and so his office is to recover God's interest in the souls of men.

Now his interest lieth in our estimation, and our love ; and these the world hath dispossessed him of. It is therefore the work of Christ to pull down this idol, and set up God in the throne of the soul. And therefore though faith be the principal mediant using grace ; yet love is the most principal, final, enjoying grace ; and more excellent than

faith, as the end, or that act which is next the end, is more excellent than the means.

2. It is the end of Christ, his cross and doctrine, to heal us, and to save us ; to heal us of our sin, and to save us from it, and its destroying fruits. But by sanctification, and so by mortification, doth Christ thus heal and save us. If health be worth nothing, the physician and all his physic is worth nothing. The health of the soul objectively is God, and formally is its holiness, or perfect disposedness, and devotedness to God ; of which anon. These therefore doth Christ come to restore : and therefore he comes to call us off the creature, and bring our affections back to God.

3. It is the end of Christ, his cross and doctrine, to conquer satan and destroy his works, and with him the rest of the enemies of God, and of our salvation ; but the world is one of these enemies, and the means by which the devil doth prevail ; therefore it is Christ's end to overcome the world, and cast it out of the hearts of men ; Luke xi. 22. John xvi. 33. 1 John iii. 5. 8. " He was manifested to this end, to take away our sins, and destroy the works of the devil ;" and therefore he causeth his followers to overcome him ; 1 John ii. 13, 14. And herewithal observe, that it is essential to the relation, to respect the end ; to the physician, that he be for the health of the patient ; and to Christ the Redeemer, that he be the Saviour of his people from their sins, and the restorer of their souls to the love of God : so that Christ is denied and made no Christ, where mortification and sanctification are denied ; he is not believed in as Christ, where he is not believed in for these ends. And therefore he that cometh not with this intent to Christ, that he may restore the image of God upon him, and bring him off from the creature unto God, that he may live to him, doth not come to Christ as Christ, and is not indeed a true Christian.

The doctrine of Christ doth lead us from the world, in these several parts of it, and by these steps, (how the cross doth it, I shewed before). 1. It declareth to us what God is, and what man is ; and so that God is our absolute Owner and Governor ; and that he is the only primitive, simple, necessary being ; and that man was made by him, and therefore for him, and disposed to him. 2. It declareth to us that the state of our integrity consisted in the closure of the

soul with God. 3. It sheweth us that our felicity consisteth in his love, and in the fruition of him by a mutual complacency. 4. It sheweth us that our first sin was by turning from him to carnal self and the world. 5. And that this is our lost estate, wherein both sin and misery are conjunct, to adhere to self and creatures, and to depart from God. 6. It sheweth us what Christ hath done and suffered, to reconcile God to us, and open us a way of admission into his presence, and how far God is reconciled to us; and thus revealeth him in the face of a Mediator as amiable to our souls, that so we might be capable of loving him, and closing with him again. For if he had remained in his wrath, he would have been the object of our hatred, or mere terror at least, and not of our love. And no man can love him that is not presented to him, and apprehended by him as lovely, that is, as good. For it is impossible that there should be an act without its proper object. Nothing but appearing good is loved. If a lost, condemned sinner have no hope given him of God's reconciliation, or his willingness to receive him to mercy, it is ('ex parte objecti') an impossible thing that the mind of that sinner should be reconciled to God. And therefore the Gospel publisheth God's reconciliation to sinners, (viz. his universal, conditional reconciliation,) before it beseech them to be reconciled to God; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. And before they believe we cannot give any one man the least assurance that God is any more reconciled to him, than to others that are unconverted, or that he is any more willing to receive him, than others.

This therefore is the great observable means whereby Christ by his Gospel recovereth the heart of a sinner unto God, even by turning the frowning countenance of God, by which he deterred the guilty into a more lovely face, as being reconcilable, and conditionally reconciled to the world through Christ, and so become to all the sinful sons of Adam a fit object to attract their love, and draw off their hearts from the deceiving world, to which they were revolted; and as being actually reconciled to all true believers, and thereby become a yet more powerful attractive of their love. 7. It doth also more fully reveal the face of God, the object of our love, and the transcendent glory that in him we shall enjoy. 8. And it disgraceth the creatures which have diverted our affections, that we may be taken off our

false estimation of them. 9. It earnestly persuadeth and soliciteth us to obey; and calls on us to turn from the world to God. 10. It backeth these persuasions with terrible threatenings, if we do not forsake the creature and return. 11. It prescribeth to us the standing ordinances and means by which this work may be further carried on. 12. And lastly, it directeth us to the right use of the creatures, instead of that carnal enjoying of them that would undo us. By all these means, (which time doth permit me but briefly to mention) the Gospel of Christ doth tend to crucify the world to us, and to recover our hearts to the chiefest good.

And besides all this which the cross and the doctrine of Christ do to this end, that you may yet more fully perceive how much it is the end of Christ's very office, and the execution thereof, let me add these two things: 1. That it is the end of Christ's providential dispensations. 2. And the work which he sendeth the Holy Ghost to perform upon the souls of his elect.

1. As the mercies of God are purposely given us to lead up our hearts to him that gave them; so when we carnally abuse them, and adhere unto the creature, it is the special use of affliction to take us off. If the rod have a voice, it speaks this as plain as any thing whatsoever; and if it reprehend us for any sin, it is for our overvaluing and adhering to the creature. The wounds that Christ giveth us, are not to kill us, but to separate us from the world, that hath separated us from God.

2. And that this is the very office or undertaken work of the Holy Ghost, is past all controversy: his work is to sanctify us; and that is by taking us off the creature, to bring us to be heartily devoted unto God. Sanctification is nothing else but our separation from the creature to God, in resolution, affection, profession and action. So that in what measure soever a man hath the Spirit, in that measure is he sanctified; and in what measure he is sanctified, in that same measure is he crucified to the world: for that is the one half of his sanctification, or it is his sanctification from the 'terminus à quo;' as many texts of Scripture do manifest.

By this time I hope it is plain to you, that mortification is of the very being of Christianity, and not any separable

adjunct of it, and that if you profess not to be dead to the world, you do not so much as profess yourselves Christians.

1. And as you see that the Christian doctrine teacheth this: So 2. It is thence clear without any more ado, that wherever the cross and doctrine of Christ are effectual, the world is crucified to that man, and he to the world. There are some great duties which a man may possibly be saved, though he omit in some cases; but this is none such. It is a wonder to see the security of worldlings, how easily they bear up a confidence of their sincerity, under this sin which is as inconsistent with sincerity as infidelity itself is! If they see a man live in common drunkenness, or adultery, or swearing, they take him for a profane and miserable wretch; and good reason for it: when in the mean time they pass no such sentence on themselves, who may deserve it as much as the worst of these. It is one notable cheat among the Papists, that occasions the ruin of many a soul, that they make a religious, mortified life to be a work of supererogation, and those that profess it, (and some of their own inventions with it, which turn it into sin) they cloister up from the rest of the world, and these they call religious people, and some few even of these, that are either more devout or superstitious than the rest, they call saints. So rare a thing is the appearance of religiousness and sanctity among them, that it must be enclosed in societies, not only separated from the world, as the church is, but separated as it were out of the church itself. And yet the common people are kept in hope of salvation in their way. By which means they are commonly brought to imagine that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation to be a religious man, or a saint; or one that doth really renounce and crucify the world; but that these things belong to certain orders of monks and friars, and that it is enough for other men to honour these devout and mortified saints, and to crave their prayers, and do some lower and easier things. And indeed their vows of chastity, and separation, and unprofitableness, and other inventions of their own, they may well conceive unnecessary to others, being noxious to themselves. But they will one day find that none but religious men and saints shall be saved, and that every true member of Christ is dead to the world, and not only monks, or votaries, or such like. And a conceit

too like to this of the Papists, is in the minds of many of our auditors. They think, indeed, that those are the best men that are resolved contemners of all the riches, and honours, and pleasures of the world; but they think of them as the Papists do of their votaries, as people of a higher pitch of sanctity than the rest, but think not that it is essential to sanctity, and to true Christianity itself. They confess they should be all contemners of the world; but, God forbid, say they, that none but such should be saved! But, I tell you, God hath forbidden already by his laws, and God will forbid hereafter by his sentence and execution, that any other but such should be saved. Do you think in good sadness that any man can be saved that is not truly dead to the world, and doth not despise it in comparison of God, and the great things of everlasting life? Let me satisfy you of the contrary here once for all, and I pray you see that your flesh provoke you not to mutter forth such unreasonable self-delusions any more. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" 1 John ii. 15. What can be spoken more plainly, or to a worldlyminded man more terribly. "For whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" chap. v. 4. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world, is the enmity with God? Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;" James iv. 4. Will not all this serve to convince you of this truth? "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" Rom. viii. 5—7. 13. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; John iii. 6. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other;" Gal. v. 16, 17. vi. 8. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit,

shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Col. iii. 1—3. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Matt. vi. 19—21. 24. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is there will your heart be also. No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." chap. x. 38, 39. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." chap. xvi. 24. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Luke xiv. 26, 27. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." ver. 33. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Heb. xi. 13—15. and to the end. But I will cite no more. Here is enough to convince you, or condemn you. If any thing at all be plain in Scripture, this is plain, that every true Christian is dead to the world, and looks on the world as a crucified thing; and that God and the life of glory which he hath promised, have the ruling and chiefest interest in their souls. Believe it, sirs, this is not a work of supererogation, nor such as only tendeth to the perfecting of a Christian, but such as is of the essence of Christianity, and without which there is not the least hope of salvation.

Use II. By all that hath been said, you may perceive what it is to be a Christian indeed, and that true Christianity doth set men at a further distance from the world, than carnal, self-deceiving professors do imagine. You see that

God and the world are enemies ; not God and the world as his creature, but as his competitor for your hearts, and as the seducer of your understandings, and the opposer of his interest, and the fuel and food of a fleshly mind, and that which would pretend to a being or goodness separated from God, or to be desirable for itself, having laid by the relation of a means to God. To be a friend to the world in any of these respects, is to be an enemy to God. And God will not save his enemies, while enemies. An enmity to God is an enmity to our salvation : for our salvation is in him alone. If then you have but awakened consciences, if the true love of yourselves be stirring in you, and if you have but the free use of common reason, I dare say you do by this time perceive, that it closely concerneth you presently to look about you, and to try whether you are crucified to the world or not. Seeing my present business is, for the securing of your everlasting peace, and the healing of your souls of that which would deprive you of it, let me entreat you all in the fear of God to give me your assistance, and to go along with me in the work ; for what can a preacher do for you, if you will do nothing for yourselves ? How can we convert, or heal, or save you, without you ? I do foresee your appearance before the Lord ; a jealous God ; that will not endure that any creature should be sweeter and more amiable to you than himself. I do foresee the condemnation that all such must undergo, and the remediless, certain misery that they are near. I know there is no way that the wit of man or angels can devise, to prevent the damnation of such a soul, but by crucifying the flesh and world by the cross of Christ, and dethroning these idols, and submitting sincerely to God for their happiness. This cannot be done while you are strangers to yourselves, and will not look into your own hearts, and see what abominable work is there, that you may be moved to return with shame and sorrow for that which hath been formerly your glory and your joy. O do not keep out the light of conviction, that you may keep up your idols in the dark : your sin is nevertheless, because you wilfully keep it out of sight : and your danger is nevertheless for being unknown. If you will sin in darkness, you shall suffer in darkness : as you have a fire of fleshly and worldly lusts within you, which abhors the light of saving truth, so God hath a fire of perpetual torment for you,

which is as far from the consolatory light of his countenance. As the fire of concupiscence is dark, so is the tormenting fire dark. If you hate the converting light, because your deeds are evil, and will not by this light be made manifest to yourselves (John iii. 18—21.), this will be your condemnation, and by this will you deprive yourselves of the glorifying light. If you love darkness, who can you blame but yourselves, if you be cast into outer darkness? and if you hate light, you cannot reasonably expect to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Col. i. 13.

What say you then, beloved hearers, are you willing to know your hearts, or not? Whether you are dead to the world, and the world to you? Methinks you should be willing; when you see the question is as great, as whether you are Christians indeed or not; and as great, as whether you are in a state of salvation or not. Methinks you that naturally love knowledge, and would be at some pains to know all that is about you in the world, should not be unwilling to know yourselves, and specially, so great a matter by yourselves, as whether you are the heirs of salvation or damnation; for in the issue it is no less. Especially when your disease is such as must be cured by the light, if ever it be cured. You cannot lament your worldliness and sensuality, you cannot lament your disaffectedness to God, and intolerable neglects of him, till you find them out. You cannot betake you to Christ for the pardon of this sin, till you have discovered it. A sin unseen will never humble you and break your hearts, nor fit them for Christ to bind them up. If you see not that the world is yet alive in you, you will not apply the cross, for the crucifying of it, nor have recourse to a crucified Christ for that end. Moreover, it is the nature of all sin, and worldly vanities to seem best in the dark, and basest in the light. As God and heavenly things seem best in the greatest light, and worst in the darkness. None do set light by God, and grace, and glory, but those that know them not. And none do set much by worldly, fleshly things, but those that know them not. As illumination brings in God into the soul, so doth it help to cast out satan and the world. When men's eyes are opened, and they are turned from darkness to light, they are presently turned "from the power of satan unto God;"

Acts xxvi. 18. These infernal worldly spirits cannot endure the light: they walk not by day, but haunt them whom they captivate, in the night of ignorance; and if we do but come in upon them with light, they are gone. It is the same devil that is called "the prince of this world, and the ruler of the darkness of this world," (Eph. vi. 12.) and this power is "a power of darkness," (Luke xxii. 53.) and therefore as light immediately expelleth darkness; so if you will admit the light of Christ, it will deliver you from the power of darkness (Col. i. 13.), and cause you "to cast off the works of darkness," (Rom. xiii. 12.); that is, your worldly, fleshly works.

For my part, I have not access to your hearts, unless grace persuade you to open me the door. I cannot promise to illuminate you, and go with you into the inmost rooms; but I shall stand at the door and hold you the candle, by which you may see yourselves what is within, if you will but consent and take the pains of a thorough inquiry. I do therefore earnestly entreat you, to set up a judicature in yourselves, and by the word which you have heard to try your states, and let conscience be judge, and do it speedily, faithfully, and effectually. By this means you may prevent a sharper trial. If you are afraid of conscience, how much more should you be afraid of God? Will not his judgment, think you, be more dreadful than your own? What madness is it to leave all to that terrible judgment, rather than to judge yourselves for the preventing of it? Believe it, you shall be condemned by yourselves or by God; yea, both by yourselves and by God, unless your self-condemnation be seconded by an effectual execution of the sin which you condemn. Willing or unwilling, you must to the bar either of conscience or of God, or both. Come on then, beloved hearers; rouse up your sleepy souls, and remember that your salvation is the thing in question; and therefore put it not to a wilful hazard, and leave not loose a matter of such consequence: but if you are men of common reason, if you do not hate yourselves, and have not a resolved plot to damn yourselves, take time while you may have it, and accept the light and help that is offered you, and speedily and strictly examine your own hearts, whether they are crucified and dead to the world, or not. Is it so,

or is it not sirs? Cannot you tell? If you know but what this mortification is, and know but your own hearts, no doubt but you may tell. And if you are ignorant of either of these, it is because you are shamefully negligent, and have not much regarded the things which you should know.

For those that are willing to be acquainted with their state, I shall, besides the foregoing discoveries, here give you a few more signs, by which you may discern whether you are crucified to the world. And I beseech you do what you can in the trial, as we go, and make up the rest at the next opportunity, when you come home, and follow it on till you come to a resolution.

It is not a perfect work of mortification, that I shall now inquire after; for that no man on earth hath obtained; nor is it any high degree, which only the stronger and better sort of true Christians do attain; for if I convince you that you want either of these, you will not much be humbled by the conviction. But it is the very least and lowest measure that is consistent with sincerity, and which is in all that are heirs of heaven. This is it that I shall now discover to you.

1. If you are sincerely crucified to the world, it is not carnal self that is your end, but your ultimate end is God and glory. Can you but tell me what is the main design of your life? Whether it be for earth or for heaven? Know this, and you may resolve the case. A worldling may speak contemptuously of the world, and speak most honourably of God and the life to come. But speculative knowledge and practical are frequently contradictory in the same man. Still it is this world that hath his chief intentions, and is the end of his designs and life; and the world to come is regarded but as a reserve, because of their unavoidable separation from this world. The main end of every upright Christian, is to please and enjoy God; and the main end of all the rest of the world, is how to please their carnal minds in the enjoyment of some earthly things. If you could but discern which of these is your chiefest end, you might discern whether it be Christ or the world that liveth in you. For Christ liveth in you, when he is your end, and the world liveth in you when it is your end.

But because some are such strangers to themselves, that

they do not know their own ends, the rest of the signs shall be for the discovery of the former, that you may discern whether the world or God be your ultimate end.

1. That which is your principal end, is most highly esteemed by your practical judgment. Not only by the speculative, but by that which moveth and disposeth of the man. Is God or the world, heaven or earth, thus most highly esteemed by you? Let your practice shew it.

2. It is your principal end, that hath the principal interest in you. That can do most with you, and prevail most in a contest. Can God or the world do more with you? Which of them doth prevail, when an opposition doth arise? I speak not of God in his efficiency; for so I know he can do what he lists; and will do it, whether you will or no; and will not ask your consent to do it. But it is God as your end, that I now speak of; as he worketh morally by your own consent, and upon your wills. Honours, and profits, and pleasures are before you, and these would draw you to something that he forbids. And God and glory are propounded to you to take you off, and turn your hearts another way; which of these can do more with you? which is it that can nullify the persuasions of the other?

3. It is your principal end, that hath the principal ruling and disposal of your whole life. You do purposely contrive the main part of your life in order to it. If you are indeed Christians, and God be your end, the main drift of your life is a contrived means for the obtaining of that end; that is, to please God, and to enjoy him in everlasting glory. If you were such as you should be, you should have no other end at all, nor should you ever do one work, or receive or use one creature, or speak one word, or behold one object, but as a means to God, intending the pleasing and enjoying him in all; as a traveller should not go one step of his journey, but in order to his end. But while we are imperfect in our love, and other graces, this will not be. But yet the main bent and drift of our lives must needs be for God and the life to come; and thus it is with every true believer; and you are none, if it be not thus with you. I say it again, lest you should slightly pass it over, though you may through infirmity sometimes step out of the way, yet if God be your end and happiness, that is, if he be your God, and you be Christians, the main scope, and bent, and

drift of your lives is for to please God and enjoy him in glory. But if the main scope and drift of your life, be for the flesh and the world, and God and religion come in but upon the by, you are then no better than unsanctified worldlings. Though you may do much in religion, and be zealous about it, and seem the most devout and most resolved professors in all the country where you live; yet if all this be but in subordination to the flesh and the world, or if co-ordinate it have the smaller interest in your hearts, and when you have done or suffered most for Christ, you will do and suffer more for the flesh and the world, you are carnal wretches, and no Christians. O that you would let conscience do its office, and judge you as we go along according to evidence! It is not by one or two actions that you can judge of your estate, but by the main scope, and bent, and drift of your life. What is your very heart set upon? What is your care, and your chief contrivances? Are they for heaven or earth? Speak out, and take the comfort of your sincerity if you are Christians! and if you are not, know it while there is remedy, and do not wilfully deceive yourselves. Have you been so far illuminated by the word and Spirit, as to see the amiableness of the Lord by faith, and have you so firm a belief of the everlasting glory, where we shall see his face immediately or more nearly, and praise him among his angels for ever? I say, have you so firm a belief of this, that you are unfeignedly resolved upon it as your happiness, that you take it for your portion, and there have laid up your hopes? Can you truly say, that God hath more of your heart than all the world, and heaven is dearer to your thoughts than earth? Can you say, that whatever you are tempted to on the by, that the main care, design, and bent of your life is for God and the glory to come: and that this is your daily work and business? If so, you are Christians indeed: you have crucified the world by the cross of Christ. The world is dead and down, where God reigneth and is exalted, and nowhere else. But if all this be clean contrary with you; and if the flesh and the world have the prevalent interest, and these cut out your work, and form your thoughts, and choose your employments; if these choose the calling that you live upon, and the manner of managing it, and your very religion; or set limits to it; if it be these that rule your tongue and hands,

and they can make a cause seem good or bad to you, and that seemeth best which most conduceth to your fleshly, worldly interests; and that seemeth worst which destroyeth it or is against it; if God be loved and worshipped but as a necessary means to your carnal happiness; or if he have but the second place in your hearts, and the leavings of the flesh and world (be they never so much), and if your religion and endeavours for salvation, for pleasing God, and for the invisible glory, but on the by; and the flesh and the world hath the main scope, and bent, and drift of your life; flatter not yourselves then: most certainly you are but carnal wretches and drudges of the world, and slaves to him that is stiled by Christ, the prince of this world. Methinks, sirs, you might be able by this time to be somewhat acquainted with your own condition, and either to condemn yourselves as worldlings and carnal men, or to see Christ by his Spirit and interest reigning in your souls, and give him the glory, and take to yourselves the joy of your sanctification. Can you tell me but what it is that you would have, if you had your wish? and what it is that is predominant in your hearts? What! know you not your own minds, and thoughts, and desires? Can you tell me what it is that is your very business in the world? even the great business that you live for, and that you study, and care, and labour for? and what is the design that you are daily carrying on? Know but this, and the question is resolved. If you see any man at work, and ask him what he is doing, and why he doth it, it is likely he is not so sottish but he can tell. If you meet a man upon the way, and ask him whither he is going, it is like he will not be so foolish, but he can tell you. He that hath no end, hath no way, and therefore is never in his way, nor out of it; nor will he care which way he goes, so he be going; and a circular motion is as good to him as a progressive. You are doing somewhat all; you are going somewhither every day: whither is it? and what is it for? Is it for heaven or earth? The texts which I before cited to you, fully give you the ground of the trial and judgment that I am urging you upon. "Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also;" Matt. vi. 21. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you;" chap. vi. 33. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire

besides thee ;" Psal. lxxiii. 25. " If any man come to me and hate not all, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple ;" Luke xiv. 26. So ver. 33. " He that forsaketh not all that he hath :"—But let us proceed a little further in the trial.

4. As that which is a man's end (if satisfactory) will content him when he can attain it, so without it nothing will content him. No man will be content without that which is the principal end of his life, though he may without some inferior end. If God be your end, nothing else will content you. If you had all the honours and prosperity of the world, and this secured to you, it would not content you. These are not the things that you live for, or that the predominant inclinations of your souls are suited to, and therefore it is not these that will please you, and serve your turn. But if the world be your end, you could be content with it if you could get it. Let who will take the world to come : if the carnal wretch were but sure of this, he would think himself a happy man, and could spare the other. He would not change his worldly happiness for the hopes of that which he never saw, nor doth not firmly and heartily believe.

5. It is a man's end that puts the estimate upon all things else. All other things are counted good or evil, so far as they help to it, or hinder it. If heaven be your end, you will account of all things as they respect that end. Those will be the best companions to you, and that the best calling and condition in life, the best speech, the best actions, the best way of disposing what you have, which you think will most promote your heavenly end. Suffering will be better in your eye than prosperity, if it do but help you best to heaven. To give your money will seem better to you than to keep it, to lose it than to gain it, when it apparently conduceth more to the pleasing of God and your salvation. That will be the best ministry and means that tendeth most to this : and so you will estimate all things else ; for it is most evident that it is the end that prizeth the means, according as they are suited to the attainment of that end.

But if fleshpleasing and worldly prosperity be your end, that will seem the best calling to you, and that the best employment and course of life, which tends most to advance and please your flesh : that will be the best company to them

and those their most beloved friends, that further this prosperity : that will seem the best way of disposing of what they have, as to the main, whatever they may do on the by. Their practical judgment esteemeth this most eligible.

6. It is only a man's end, and the inseparable necessary means thereto, that he can by no means spare. Other things he can spare, and be without, but not without this. If God be your end, your heart is so upon him that you cannot be without him : you can be without honour, or riches, or life itself, but not without God. But if the world be your end, then it is clean contrary ; and that is the thing that you cannot be without. Hence it is that men plead necessity of that which is their end, and the necessary means. One thing seems necessary to the Christian : he must have God in and by Christ. I must use his means (saith he), I must avoid the contrary. How shall I do this evil, and sin against God ? But the carnal man's necessity is on the other side : ' I must raise my family if I can ; at least I must keep my estate : I must not be undone : I must preserve my name, my life.

7. A man will hazard or part with any thing to secure or attain his principal end. Nothing can be too good, or too dear to purchase it : nothing can stand in competition with it. If God and glory be your end, away goes all that is inconsistent with it. You will part with a right hand or eye, as thinking it better to have heaven with one, than hell with both. You can part with house, and land, and country, because you seek for a city " that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ;" Heb. xi. 9, 10. You can live as strangers and pilgrims on earth, and mind not to return to the world which you have renounced, " because you desire a better, even an heavenly country ;" ver. 11—16. You will rather " choose to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, esteeming the very reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, because you have respect to the recompence of the reward ;" ver. 24—26. The fear of man, even of the princes of the earth will not prevail against your hope, " because you see him that is invisible ;" ver. 27. You can endure " to be made a gazing-stock, by reproaches and afflictions, and become the companions of them that are so used." You cannot only part with your substance when God calls for it,

but even "take joyfully the spoiling of your goods, as knowing that you have a better and more enduring substance in heaven;" chap. x. 33, 34. You "will reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;" Rom. viii. 18. In a word, you can "deny yourselves, forsake all, and follow Christ in expectation of a treasure in heaven;" Luke xviii. 22. Never tell me that heaven is your end, if there be any thing which you cannot part with to obtain it. For that which is dearest to you is your end. Why else is it that labour and sufferings, yea and the apparent hazard of their salvation, seems not to a worldling too dear a price for the purchasing of their present prosperity, but because they have laid up a treasure upon earth, and earthly things are their chiefest end.

8. Lastly, that is your ultimate end, which you think in your practical judgment you can never love or labour for too much. I know there is scarce a worldling to be found, which will not give it you under his hand as his settled judgment, that it is God and glory that cannot be loved too much, and he will confess that he loveth the world too much. But yet he doth it while he confesseth it; and he denieth his chiefest love to God, while he acknowledgeth it due to him. And therefore it is not his practical, effectual judgment that is for it, but only he hath an ineffectual notion or opinion of it. But it is otherwise with the unsanctified. Philosophers and divines use to say, that virtue is in the middle, between two extremes; but that is only to be interpreted of the subservient virtues, which are exercised about the means; but the chiefest good and ultimate end is such as cannot be loved too much. The measure here is, as Austin speaks, that it be without measure. It is our all that is due to that which we esteem and take for our all. God is our all objectively for fruition; and the all of our affections and endeavours should be his. With all our heart, with all our soul and might, is the due measure of our love to him. We can never seek our end too diligently, nor buy it too dearly, nor do too much for it, in God's way. And as the believer thinks he can never have too much of God, nor do too much for him; so the lives of worldlings tell us, that even while they speak disgracefully of the world, they think they can never have too much of it, nor would they think they could

ever do too much for it, were it not that overdoing for one part of their worldly interest, doth deprive them of another part.

I have now told you how you may discern whether it be God or the world that liveth in your hearts, and whether you are dead to God or to the world. What remaineth but that you take it home, and apply it yet closer than I can do, and try what God it is that you adore; and what felicity it is that you esteem and intend, and consequently what you are, and what will become of you if you persevere. I beseech you make this your serious work, and take some time for it purposely when you come home, to do it more effectually than now on the sudden hearing may be expected. What say you? will you take yourselves apart some time, and purposely search your hearts to the very quick, till you have found whether the world be crucified to you by the cross of Christ, and the hopes of glory? If you did but know the use of the discovery, I am confident you would not need so much entreating.

Truly brethren, it is one of the mysteries of sin and self-deceit, that such a multitude of people, yea, seemingly religious, can think so well of themselves as they do, and bear it out with such audacious confidence, as if they were the real servants of Christ, when it is apparent even to the eyes of others, that they are not crucified to the world but live to it, and serve it day by day. How anxiously are they contriving for it, while their care to please God is so exceeding slender, that it takes up but little of their time and thoughts. How sweet are their thoughts of a plentiful estate! To have the world at will, houses, and lands, and full provisions for themselves and theirs, that they may be clothed with the best, and fare of the best, and sit with the highest, and be honoured and revered of all, how fine a life doth this seem to them! If they have but a fair opportunity to rise, how little tender are they of the lawfulness of the means, at least where they are not so wicked as to dishonour them! They can believe that to be the truth which befriendeth their worldly interest; and that to be false and erroneous which is against it. The world chooseth many of their opinions for them, and much of their religion, and telleth them what party they should side with, and what not. It telleth them how far they shall tolerate other men's sin,

and how far not; how far they shall make profession of their faith, and how far they shall conceal it from the knowledge of the world; and so as Paul saith, they account "gain to be godliness," (1 Tim. vi. 5.) not only esteeming it better than downright godliness, but measuring out their godliness by their gain; making that to seem religious which fitteth their carnal ends, and easily believing that which is for their worldly interest. How weak and silly reasons will persuade them that the point is true, the cause is good, the means is lawful, which serveth their turns for worldly ends! And the clearest, unquestionable evidences are nothing to them, that are brought for the contrary. So potent a persuader is worldly interest, that any thing will serve where it takes part, and nothing prevail that it doth contradict. A powerful disputant, that most commonly hath the best, whatever side it takes, and the cause goes for it, be it right or wrong. Either they will not read such long and tedious discourses as are against them, or they find some passage presently to quarrel with, that is too displeasing, and makes them cast away the rest. Or if they read the whole, or hear you to the last, it is with a resisting spirit all the while. Before they know what you will say, they have confuted you. For they have resolved to believe that your reasons are insufficient, and their cause is good. They read and hear not only with a prejudice answerable to the reasons that formerly resolved them, but with an opposing enmity and fixedness of will. Had we only their understandings to dispute with, it were the less; but our main dispute is with will and passion, which have no ears, nor eyes, nor brains, though sense enough. Their deceiving baits first catch the sensual part, and so come to bribe the intellect and the will; and their strongest root is still in the brutish part where it began, which will hear no reason. When Paul was told of the truth of that doctrine which he before had persecuted, and must himself be persecuted if he should entertain it, he sticks not at that, but immediately consulteth not with flesh and blood, but falls to work; Gal. i. 16. But these men will scarce do any thing but flesh and blood must be consulted with. The word was David's counsellor; and the world is theirs. The first question is, Is it for my honour or dishonour, my profit or disprofit, my pleasure or my trouble? and as it relisheth with their flesh,

so is it esteemed of and concluded. And which is more, their carnal interest so blinds their eyes, that they see not oftentimes their most palpable delusions. When their actions are such as unprejudiced standers by do blush at, and the wisest and most faithful of their friends lament, and the shame of them is open to the view of the world, yet flesh doth so befool them, that they see not their nakedness, but glory in their shame. Commodity cannot blush. The applause of flatterers justifieth their crimes against the accusations of God and all good men. Have these men crucified the world indeed?

A Christian looketh so much to his rule, as well as his end, that he dare not say of heaven itself, that every means is lawful which seemeth to conduce to it. But these men think that any thing is lawful that brings them gain, or makes them great.

And as for the improvement of their talents for God, What is to be seen? What self-seeking and unprofitable servants are they? They will confess that they have all from God, and that all is due to him again; but it is but a self-condemning confession. How many charitable and pious uses do call aloud for much of their estates! but how little of it is so expended! Now and then two-pence or a groat to the poor is a great matter with them, and the wealthy can come off with the quantity of the widow's mite. Let God call, and ministers call, and the poor call and cry for it, all cannot extort their idol out of their purses. So fast do they hold their money, that scarce any thing but thieves, or soldiers, or death can wring it out of their hands. But so loose do they hold spiritual good, which they seem to mind, that if a seducer cannot easily entice them from it, or a derision shame them from it, yet at least a good bargain for the world can hire them from it, and the frowns of men in power, or the change of the times can affright them from it. Long will it be before they will go from house to house through the parish, and see what poor want clothing, what children want means to set them to trades, and what families want Bibles and other books that may promote their salvation, and go as far as they are able in procuring them, and set their friends to work where their own ability is too short. O the disproportion that there is between the verbal service and the more costly service of wordly, hypocritical profes-

sors ! How far do their formal duties exceed their charitable communications and distributions ! Most commonly the world doth cut short even these their religious actions. They can scarce find time to be constant in worshipping God in their families, or in secret ; in instructing and exhorting their children and servants ; there is some business to be done, or some gain to be got ; or while they seem to be deepest in their devotions, their thoughts run after their covetousness, and it is one God that hath their tongues, and another that hath their hearts. So that they pray as if they prayed not, and hear as if they heard not, and possess God's ordinances as not possessing them, and use them merely as abusing them, as apprehending no great benefit to come by them, but the fruit of them were nothing but mere conceits, or all God's ordinances were but (as the Scottish sacrilegious lord called their Book of Discipline) devout imaginations. But yet for all the shortness of their devotions, their real devotions and works of charity are much more short. And for pious contributions and communications, some of them scarce know what they mean. They will sooner learn to scorn such duties, and plead against them as no duties, than conscientiously to perform them. They say they are sanctified, and the people of God ; and if they were so indeed, they would be devoted to him without reserve : and if themselves were devoted or sanctified to him, all that they have must needs be so too. But it is a holy name that they have received, and not a consecrated heart or purse. I doubt it will be long before the piety of this age will give as much to holy uses, as the seeming piety of it hath taken from them. And if there be more piety in taking from holy uses, than in giving to them, we may next be taught that it is a more pious work to destroy preachers than to preach, and to destroy praying than to pray, and to curse God than to praise him. I have oft wondered that so many that we take for godly persons do so overlook the many and exceeding urgent precepts to liberal distributions for God and his service, which Scripture doth contain ; and how they can think to be saved without obeying these commands, any more than without obeying the commands for hearing, praying, or any other religious duty. Do they not read these passages as well as others, in their Bibles ? How comes it to pass that conscience then stirs not, when they

neglect such important duties? They read that the Christians of the primitive times sold all, and delivered the money to the apostles: to manifest practically the nature and power of the Christian religion, which consisteth in renouncing all for Christ, and devoting ourselves and all that we have to God, upon his promise of a treasure in the heavens. They read that it was an appointed duty in the churches, to lay by in the church's stock every Lord's day for the relief of needy Christians, according as God had prospered them the week before; 1 Cor. xvi. 1—3. They read that Christ so regardeth this duty, that the sentence at judgment is described by him, as passing upon this account. And yet for all this, flesh and blood will be wiser than to trust God, and to obey so chargeable a command. They will venture on damnation to save their money; and let go heaven for fear of losing by it. And that they may be wise indeed, they can justify all, and labour to bring their duty into scorn. 'We are not capable,' say they, 'of giving to God; because that all is his already.' Self-condemning wretch! Is all his? Why then hath he not all! Give then to God the things that are his own. It is not a proper donation that we call you to. You cannot give him a propriety who hath it already; nor alienate it from yourselves, who never had it, in respect to God; but yet you may give it to him by tradition; you may deliver him his own in the way that he requires it, and lay out your Master's stock for his service! And if he will so far honour your fidelity, as to call this a giving or a lending to him, methinks this should encourage you to liberality, but I see not how it can excuse your denying him his own.

Object. 'But it is to satisfy the covetousness of the priests, that we are called on to give to God, as if they were God, or God had that which they have.'

Answ. Adding reproach to covetousness, will prove one day but a sad excuse for sin. If this age understood the fifth commandment, and the heinousness of ingratitude to God and man for the greatest mercies, and how it is that Christ teacheth and ruleth, and how he is obeyed or despised in the world, they would tremble to think of the scorn and contempt of a faithful ministry. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of

the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it;" Prov. xxx. 17. "Whoso curseth his father or mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness;" Prov. xx. 20. "And he shall die the death;" Exod. xx. 17. And for your objection; the priests of the Lord under the law were not God; the apostles and Gospel ministers were not God; nor any that serve upon the altar, who yet must live upon the altar; the poor themselves be not God, and yet you shall understand one day, that "inasmuch as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to Christ:" and in despising them, you despised him; Matt. xxv. Luke x. 16. The vanity of your fond pretence was sufficiently told you by Christ himself, Matt. xxv. 45. where he tells you how he will answer your companions that shall use it, "Inasmuch as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me." And yet will you say, "Lord, when did we see thee hungry, naked," &c. when you have your answer beforehand. Worldly wretches! you would not part with your wealth, if you could help it, to Christ himself, if he should come and ask it of you. For you read in his word, that it is he that asketh it, and commandeth it from you now. But if you will not believe that it is Christ that requireth it, till he is come himself in person to demand it; and if you are such faithful stewards, that you will part with none of your Master's stock, till he ask you for it face to face, for fear of misemploying it; be patient awhile, and he will come and seek his own with advantage, but to the eternal woe of unprofitable servants. You can spare God the tithe of your words, in formal duties, when the devil and the world have had the rest; but not so much as the old legal proportion of your estates, much less the evangelical all. What makes you drop prayers so much thicker than alms or distributions? Do you think that God doth not as strictly require the one as the other? If speaking were not cheaper to you than giving, your prayers and religious talk would be so seldom and so short, as that it would be as your distributions are, next to none. If words cost money, your tongues would be as strait as your purses are, and the world should scarce hear whether you were of any religion or none. Do these men glory only in the cross of Christ, and is the world by it crucified to them, and they to the world? We have their

answer in their actions, what need we any more? They are dead in and by the world, but not to the world. They are its slaves, though they are called the servants of Christ.

Honorable, worshipful, and all wellbeloved, it is a weighty employment that occasioneth your meeting here to-day^a. The estates and lives of men are in your hands. But it is another kind of judgment which you are all hastening towards: when judges and justices, the accusers and accused, must all appear upon equal terms, for the final decision of a far greater cause. The case that is then and there to be determined, is not whether you shall have lands or no lands, life or no life; (in our natural sense;) but whether you shall have heaven or hell, salvation or damnation, an endless life of glory with God, and the Redeemer, and the angels of heaven, or an endless life of torment with devils and ungodly men. As sure as you now sit on those seats, you shall shortly all appear before the Judge of all the world, and there receive an irreversible sentence to an unchangeable state of happiness or misery. This is the great business that should presently call up your most serious thoughts, and set all the powers of your souls on work for the most effectual preparation; that if you are men, you may quit yourselves like men, for the preventing of that dreadful doom which unprepared souls must there expect. The greatest of your secular affairs are but dreams and toys to this: were you at every assize to determine causes of no lower value than the crowns and kingdoms of the monarchs of the earth, it were but as children's games to this. If any man of you believe not this, he is worse than the devil that tempteth him to unbelief: and let him know that unbelief is no prevention, nor will put off the day, or hinder his appearance; but ascertain his condemnation at that appearance. And if you all do believe this, you will sure be content that I speak to you of it as one that also do believe it. Faith is the evidence of things not seen: by it we may foresee the judgment set, the world appearing, and yourselves there waiting for your final doom. And because we clearly find beforehand, who then shall die, and who shall live, I shall desire of you that you would presently improve the discovery. Some think we cannot know in this life what

^a This was preached at an assize at Worcester, before the judges, and therefore here are these passages suited to that occasion.

will become of us in the next: but God hath not bid us try in vain, nor in vain delivered us so many signs by which it may be known, nor is the difference between the saved and the damned so small as to be undiscernible. Our own reason may tell us that the righteous God would not send some to glory with angels, and others to endless misery with devils, and make such difference between men hereafter, if there were not a considerable difference here. He that knows the law and the fact, may know before your assizes what will become of every prisoner, if the proceedings be all just, as in our case they will certainly be. Christ will judge according to his laws: know therefore whom the law condemneth or justifieth, and you may know whom Christ will condemn or justify. And seeing all this is so, doth it not concern us all to make a speedy trial of ourselves in preparation to this final trial? I shall for your own sakes therefore, take the boldness, as the officer of Christ, to summon you to appear before yourselves, and keep an assize this day in your own souls, and answer at the bar of conscience to what shall be charged upon you. Fear not the trial; for it is not conclusive, final, nor a peremptory, irreversible sentence that must now pass. Yet slight it not; for it is a necessary preparative to that which is final and irreversible. Consequentially it may prove a justifying accusation, an absolving condemnation, and if you proceed to execution, a saving, quickening death, which I am now persuading you to undergo. The whole world is divided into two sorts of men: one that love God above all, and live for him; and the other that love the flesh and world above all, and live to them. One that lay up a treasure in earth, and have their heart there; the other that lay up a treasure in heaven, and have their heart there. One that seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; another that seek first the things of this life. One that mind and savour the things of the flesh and of man; the other that mind and savour most the things of the Spirit and of God. One that account all things dung and dross that they may win Christ; another that make light of Christ in comparison of their business, and riches, and pleasures in the world. One that live by sight and sense upon present things; another that live by faith upon things invisible. One that have their conversation in heaven, and live as strangers upon earth;

another that mind earthly things, and are strangers to heaven. One that have in resolution forsaken all for Christ, and the hopes of a treasure in heaven; another that resolve to keep somewhat here, though they venture and forsake the heavenly reward, and will go away sorrowful that they cannot have both. One that being born of the flesh is but flesh; the other that being born of the Spirit is spirit. One that live as without God in the world; the other that live as without the seducing world in God, and in and by the subservient world to God. One that have ordinances and means of grace, as if they had none; the other that have houses, lands, wives, as if they had none. One that believe as if they believed not, and love God as if they loved him not, and pray as if they prayed not, as if the fruit of these were but a shadow; the other that weep as if they wept not, (for worldly things,) and rejoice as if they rejoiced not. One that have Christ as not possessing him, and use him and his name, as but abusing them; the other that buy as if they possessed not, and use the world as not abusing it. One that draw near to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him; the other that corporally converse with the world, when their hearts are far from it. One that serve God, who is a Spirit, with carnal service, and not in spirit and truth; the other that use the world itself spiritually, and not in a carnal, worldly manner. In a word, one sort are children of this world; the other are the children of the world to come, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. One sort have their portion in this life; and the other have God for their portion. One sort have their good things in this lifetime, and their reward here; the other have their evil things in this life, and live in hope of the everlasting reward.

I suppose you know that all this is from the word of God, and therefore I need not cite the texts which do contain it! But lest any doubt, I will lay them all together, that you may peruse them at leisure, Matt. xxii. 37. x. 37. vi. 12—21. 33. John vi. 27. Isa. lv. 1—3. Rom. viii. 5—7. 13. Phil. iii. 9—11. Matt. xxii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Heb. xi. 1. throughout. Phil. iii. 19—21. Psalm cxix. 19. Heb. xi. 13. Luke xiv. 33. xviii. 22. John iii. 6. Ephes. ii. 12. 1 Cor. x. 31. Psalm xvi. 8. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

1 Cor. vii. 29—31. John ii. 23, 24. Psalm lxxviii. 35—73. John xv. 2. i. 9—11. Matt. xv. 8. Psalm lxxiii. 23—25. 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. Matt. xv. 9. John iv. 22, 23. 1 Cor. x. 31. Luke x. 8. xx. 34. Rom. viii. 16, 17. Psalm xvii. 14. xvi. 5. lxxiii. 26. Luke xvi. 25. Matt. vi. 5. v. 12. Luke xviii. 22. In these texts is plainly contained all that I have here said to you.

Well then, beloved hearers, seeing you that sit here present are all of one of these two sorts, let conscience speak, which is it that you are of? These are the two sorts that shall stand on the right and left hand of Christ in judgment. They that gave Christ his own with advantage, and lived to him, and studiously devoted their riches and other talents to his use, as men that unfeignedly made God their end, these are they that are set on the right hand, and judged as blessed to the kingdom which they so esteemed. And those that hid their talents, by keeping or expending them to their private use, denying them to Christ, and living to themselves, these are they that are set on the left hand, and adjudged to the everlasting fire, with the devils whom they served. It is a desperate mistake of self-deceiving men, to think that a state of holiness consisteth only in external worship, or that a state of wickedness consisteth only in some gross sins. I tell you from the word of God, the difference is greater, and lieth deeper than so. If you would know whether you are Christians indeed, and shall be saved, the first great question is, What is your end? What take you for your portion? And what is it that hath the prevalent stream of your desires and endeavours? As it is not every step that we set out of the way to heaven, that will prove us ungodly; so it is not any religiousness whatsoever that standeth in a subserviency to the world, that will prove you godly. Would you know then what you are? And whether you are in the way to heaven or hell? And what God will judge of you, if you so continue? Why then deal faithfully with yourselves, and answer this question without deceit! What is it that hath your hearts, your very hearts? What is it that is the matter of your dearest love? And what is the matter of your chiefest care? What is it that is the very bent and scope of your life? Is it for this world, or the world to come? What do you daily labour and live for? Is it for God, or your carnal selves?

What interest is it that is predominant in you? Know but that and know all.

And now I shall apply myself to those of you that are guilty; in whose souls the worldly interest is predominant, and in whom the world is not crucified by the cross of Christ, but rather Christ again crucified by the world. I have no mind to dishonour you, or exasperate you; but if faithfulness to Christ and you will do both, there is no remedy. I do here prefer an indictment against you in the court of your consciences, and before this congregation: the articles I shall distinctly read. And first, I require you, study not a defence; excuse not, extenuate not your crimes; but confess your sin freely, and condemn yourselves impartially, and return to God, and forsake them speedily, or you shall do worse. Self-condemnation may be saving and preventive; and the death of sin thereupon may be the life of your souls: but if this be neglected, and you hold on awhile till the great assize, you shall have another kind of charge than this, even such an one as shall appal that face that now can merrily smile at the accusation; and such an one as shall bring down the stoutest of your spirits, and make the hardest heart to feel, and the most stubborn of you all to stoop and tremble. O how easy is it to hear your sin and danger from such a worm as I! or to hear your state discovered, and yourselves condemned, by a minister of Christ in a pulpit! But how dreadful will it be to hear all this from the Lord of glory! and that when the case is past remedy, which now might have been remedied if you would, and if your obstinate hearts had not resisted.

The general charge that I put in against you is, That you are carnal flesh-pleasers, and have loved and lived to the world which you should have crucified, and have not lived as devoted unto God, nor hath he been your end, or his interest predominant in your hearts and lives.

I speak only to the guilty; and for evidence of the fact, I need none but your consciences, seeing it is only to your consciences that I accuse you, which are acquainted, or should be, with the whole. But lest conscience itself should be bribed and corrupted, I shall, besides all that is before said, produce a little evidence more.

1. If indeed the world be crucified to you, what meaneth your eager pursuit after it? Are not your thoughts con-

triving for it, and your wit and interest all improved for it? Are not those taken for your chief friends, that further your advancement or worldly ends? and those for your chief enemies that hinder it most? Is it not in your mind in the night when you awake, and in the day, when you are alone? Do you not rise earlier for your worldly business, than for prayer, or any holy exercise? Ask your family, whether you do not oftener call them up to work than to pray? and whether you drive them not on harder to your own service than to God's? and whether you examine them not more strictly about your business, than about the matters that their salvation doth depend upon? and whether you be not more deeply offended with them for crossing your commodity, than for sinning against God? Ask your neighbours whether you talk not with them many hours of worldly vanities, for one hour's serious discourse about the life to come? What a stir do poor men make to be rich, or to live in some content to the flesh, and what a stir do rich men make to be richer, or to keep that they have; and yet have they the face to pretend that they are crucified to the world.

2. If you are dead to the world, how comes it to pass that it hath so powerful an influence upon your judgment? and that you change your minds as your carnal interest doth change? and can set your sails to any wind that is like to drive you to the harbour (as you call it, but indeed upon the sands) of your worldly ends? What would you not give in troublesome times, to know certainly which will be the prevalent side, that you might resolve to what side to take yourselves; and perhaps what religion to be of, or to seem so to be? Among all the books that are written, if there were but one that taught the art of growing rich, or a directory for obtaining dignities and honours in the world, how eagerly would you buy it, and how diligently would you read it? more diligently than you read the Bible, or any book of that nature. If preachers did teach you the way of prosperity and advancement, and could tell you how to be all great and honourable in this world, O how early would you come to the congregation! how attentively would you hear! how retentively would you remember! and how faithfully would you practise! Then how beautiful would the feet be of them that bring you the tidings of such good

things? What honourable persons should ministers be! and how well worthy of your tithes, and more! Then you would not swell against their doctrine or application; nor cavil at them instead of understanding them, nor scorn them as men of a useless office, nor take them for your enemies, nor refuse to come to them and ask their advice. Wretched hypocrites! It is our office to help them to the everlasting kingdom; and the more diligent we are in this, the more they hate us. If we send for them to instruct them personally, or catechize them, or help them in the matters of salvation, they scorn to come, and ask us by what authority we send for them. But if we could teach them all to be princes, or lords, or gentlemen, yea, or but to get a few shillings more than they have, none would draw back. None of them would ask us, 'By what authority do you send for us?' Had we but money enough to feed them all, O what good men should we be! and how many friends should we have! and how easily might we persuade them! If one man had all the money in the land, and could secure it, and the disposal of it, from violence, what might not that man do? and who is it that would not be on his side, except those few that have crucified the world? The multitude would even follow that man that hath money, as a horse will follow him that hath provender; and yet they will hypocritically pretend to be crucified to the world. But if indeed they are so, how comes it to pass that conscience is so often stretched and wracked, to make it own a gainful cause! and that many that have seemed godly, can break over all bounds of law and charity, friendship and religion, to attain the dignities or riches which they so desire! and will tread down the nearest friend, and Christ himself, as much as in them lieth, if he stand in the way of their affected exaltation. Yea, soul and all shall be ventured in this game. Rise they must, and rise they will, if they can procure it. Whatever become of heaven, they must have earth. Seeing it is their god, their end, 'per fas aut nefas,' it must be had. As the commonwealth's man saith, 'Salus populi suprema Lex esto;' and the Christian saith, 'The pleasing of God is the supreme law;' so the worldling's maxim is, that the 'Interest of the flesh is the supreme law.' And are these men crucified to the world?

3. If the world were a crucified thing in your eyes, you

would not so much overvalue the rich, and vilify or neglect the poor as you do. A humble, godly man that walks the streets in a threadbare coat, may pass by you without the least respect; but if a shining gallant be in the place, how observantly do you behave yourselves! If a poor man, though never so wise and pious, have any business with you, how cold his entertainment! how strange is your deportment towards him! and how slightly do you shake him off! But if they be rich and honourable in the world, you are their servants, and no respect is too much for them, nor no entertainment too good. Wisdom and piety clothed in rags may pass by you unobserved; when a silken sot is bowed to like an idol. As reverently as you now speak of Peter and Paul, and Christ himself, now you hear them magnified, and see not their outward appearances as they did that conversed with them on earth, I make no doubt but if you had lived in those days, and seen them of so low a presence, and walk up and down in so mean a garb, attended or regarded by few but the poor, you would have set as light by them as others, and looked at them as poor contemptible fellows; if not as the filth and the offscouring of all things; and if you had not laid hands on them as too saucy reprovers of you, at least you would have given them one of Julian's jeers, or Hobbs's scorns. It was this worldly spirit that caused the Jews to be such obstinate unbelievers, and to persecute Christ and his servants. Men reverence not the face of the poor. And this is it that continueth them in their unbelief to this very day. We have many of their own writings and disputations against Christ published by themselves; and we find this the very sum of all their reasonings: "Shew us a Messiah that fetcheth us from captivity, that gathereth the whole nation of the Jews to Judea, and restoreth them to their ancient possessions and dignities, with much more, and makes the nations stoop to them and serve them, and sets up again the temple and the law, and we will believe in him as the true Messiah; but in no other will we believe." For though they cannot deny but the prophesied time of the Messiah's coming is past, yet taking it for granted that this only is his true description, they say they must look more at the description than the time; and to solve the prophecies, they do believe that the Messiah did come about Christ's incarnation, but is somewhere hid with Enoch and

Elias, and will appear when the Jews do mend their lives, and are worthy of him. Thus a worldly, carnal mind that blindly admireth worldly things, and savoureth not the things of the Spirit, nor discerneth the excellency of the heavenly riches, doth make them to be open infidels, and makes the Turks adore their Mahomet, and makes the nominal bastard Christian to set so light by the true riches of the Gospel, and only to honour the name of Christ; for they cannot receive the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned; 1 Cor. ii. 14. Were not you worldlings you would discern more matter for your admiration, reverence, and love in the poorest heavenyminded man, than in the greatest prince on earth that is ungodly. But you have the faith of Jesus Christ the Lord of glory with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say to him, 'Sit thou here in a good place;' and say to the poor, Stand thou there;' despising the poor, and committing sin by respect of persons, as if you believed not that God had chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him; James ii. 1—10.

Object. 'But must we not honour the gifts of God? Riches are his gifts.'

Ans. Yes, according to their nature and use. Riches are a gift which he giveth even to his enemies, and to those that must perish for ever; and few that have them come to heaven. But holiness is a gift which he giveth to none but his beloved, and is the beginning of eternal life. Which then should be most honoured?

Object. 'But would you draw man to despise dignities and authority?'

Ans. Authority is one thing, and worldly riches is another. We reverence authority more than you do. We look on it as a beam from God, as participating of somewhat that is divine. I look on a magistrate as God's officer, and one that deriveth his authority from him, and I no more acknowledge power which is not efficiently from God as the supreme Rector of the universe, than I acknowledge any natural being, which is not efficiently from God as the Author of nature and the first Being. I look at a magistrate as ultimately for God, as a man authorized to do

his work, and none but what is ultimately his. So that as his office is so human, as to be also participatively divine, and he is so a human creature, as to be by participation divine, so the reverence and obedience which I owe to a magistrate is by participation divine; and therefore though I judge not peremptorily that those ancients were in the right that made the fifth commandment to be the last of the first table, yet I doubt not but our moderns are less likely to be in the right, that confine it only to the second table. And as I think it standeth so between the two as in several respects to belong to each, so I rather think that it more principally belongeth to the first. You see then the difference between a true Christian's honouring of magistrates and yours. You honour them but for your worldly ends; and because they are able to do you good or hurt. But we honour them as God's officers, speaking and acting for him and from him by his commission, and we obey their power as participatively divine; but as they can do us good or hurt, we less regard them: And this honour and obedience we owe them, not for their wealth, but their authority; and if the meanest man have this authority, he shall be honoured and obeyed by us, as well as the richest.

4. If the world be crucified to you, how comes it to pass that you are so tenderly sensible of every loss or dishonour that doth befall you? If you are wronged in your estate, what a matter do you make of it? If a man should deprive you but of a few pounds, you can hardly put it up, but you must go to law for it, or you must seek revenge; or if you pass it by, you think you have done some great meritorious act. If one slander you, or dishonour you, how sensible are you of it! How it sticks upon your stomachs, as if you had lost your treasure! Death is not sensible. If you were dead to the world, and the world to you, these things would all seem smaller in your eyes; and you would have more ado to remember them, than now you have to forget them. You could not be so sensible of a loss or an injury, if you were not too much alive to the world. And if you be poor, what an impatient, complaining life do you live! as if you wanted your treasure or your God; and if you grow rich or gain, how glad are you! Were you dead to the world, and the world to you, you would be more indifferent to these matters, and poverty and riches would not seem so much to differ as now they do; but godliness with contentment,

which is profitable to all things, would seem to you the great gain ; 1 Tim. iv. 8. vi. 6.

Object. 'But may not a man go to law to recover his own, or to right his own reputation, if he be slandered ?'

Answ. Distinguish carefully in all your wrongs, between God's interest in them and your own. Your own you must forgive, but God's you cannot. If he have intrusted you with talents for his service, and any would fraudulently or violently deprive you of them, you must look after them as your Master's stock. If a wound in you name or state disable you from doing God service, you must use all lawful means to heal it, that you may be in a capacity of serving him again ; and if your children, or others, have remotely a right in what you are defrauded of, you may look after their right. And you must not remit the crime, as oft as you remit the injury ; for that God hath imposed penalty upon ; and the rule is good, that the punishment of the notoriously vicious is a due to the commonwealth, because of the necessity of it to its good. In a word therefore, if you would do these things, you might yourselves resolve when it is lawful to go to law, or seek your right, and when not. 1. If you can well distinguish between God's interest and your own. 2. And be sure you forgive all your own injuries. 3. And that you watch your hearts narrowly, lest they pretend God's cause, and intend your own. 4. And be able by the consideration of circumstances, to discern in probability, whether God's interest will be more promoted by going to law, or passing it by.

But alas, how rare a course is this ! Of all the suits that are before you at this assize, I fear there are few that are commenced unfeignedly for the interest of God. If the Lord himself should ask both plaintiff and defendant, Do you follow this suit for me, or for yourselves ? What answer think you they must make, if they speak the truth ? But of this anon.

Having thus given in my general charge against the carnal worldling, and some evidence of his guilt ; I shall now give you the quality and aggravations of your crime in several articles, as followeth :

1. You are guilty of idolatry, which is high treason against the God of heaven. That which hath your highest estimation, and dearest affection, and chiefest service, is

your god. But this the world hath ; therefore it is your god. That which hath the most of your hearts is your god. But it is the world that hath most of your hearts. You know that the main drift of your life is for the world. And that which hath the main bent of your life, hath your heart. If reason be no evidence, you cannot refuse Scripture : “ Mortify therefore your members upon earth,” (Col. iii. 5.) ; and one is, “ Covetousness, which is idolatry. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetousness man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God ;” Eph. v. 5. The case is plain in Scripture and in the effects. The world hath that love that God should have, that care, and trust, and service which belongs to God ; and therefore it is your god. I do therefore here on the behalf of God, indite every worldly, carnal sinner of you at the bar of your own conscience, as a traitor against the Lord that made you, and against the Son of God that did redeem you ! And what greater sin can man be guilty of ? (besides the blaspheming of the Holy Ghost.) He that would have another god, would have the Lord to be ungodded, and to lose his sovereign power and goodness ! And is such a man fit to live in his sight ? Why wretched traitor ! if he be not thy God, thou canst not expect to live by him, or be sustained, preserved, and provided for by him. Thou canst not live an hour without him ! and yet wilt thou cast him off ? Wouldst thou pluck up thy own foundation ? and cut off the bough on which thou standest ? Would thou fire the house thou dwellest in ? and sink the ship that keepeth thyself and all that thou hast from sinking ! Relations are mutual. If he shall be no God to thee, be it known to thee, thou shalt be none of his people ! If he shall be no Father to thee, thou shalt be none of his child. And, wretched soul, what wilt thou do without him ? It is he that keeps thy soul in thy body while thou art serving his enemy. Thou wouldst be in hell within this hour if his mercy did not keep thee out. And is this thy requital of him ? He hath but one trinity of enemies, the flesh, the world, and the devil ; and wilt thou turn to these, and forsake him by whom thou livest ? Why, I tell thee, the Lord must be thy God, or thou must have no God indeed. The world is like the heathen’s idols ; that hath eyes, but cannot see thy wants ; ears, but cannot hear thy

cries ; hands, but cannot help thee in thy distress. All thy riches, dignities, and pleasures are silly things to make a god of. They may have the room of God in thy heart ; and in that sense be thy god ; but indeed they are no more God than a mawkin is a man ; nor more able to help and save thee. Wouldst thou then have a God or no God ? If thou wouldst have no God, thou wouldst have no helper, no governor, no preserver, nor no happiness. And dost thou think that thou art sufficient for thyself ? What ! canst thou live a day without God ? Canst thou save thyself from danger without him ? Canst thou relieve or shift for thyself at death without him ? Darest thou tell him so to his face, and stand to it ? But if thou wouldst have a god, what god wouldst thou have ? Wouldst not thou have a god that can preserve, and help, and save thee ? The world cannot do it, man ! I shall tell thee more of this anon, that the world cannot do it. If thou trust to it, it will deceive thee. But if thou say then, ‘The Lord shall be thy God,’ away then with all thy idols. God will have no partner, much less a superior, that is exalted above himself in thy soul. As Joshua said to the Israelites, so I say to you, “Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the world (which hath been your god), and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord ;” Josh. xxiv. 14. And if you say as they, “God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods,” I answer you as he, “Away then with the world, and all other idols ;” or else, “ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy and a jealous God, and will not forgive such transgressions and sins ; but if ye will forsake the Lord and serve the world, he will turn against you and consume you ;” ver. 19, 20. God will not stoop to be an underling in your hearts. He should have all, and will at last have all or none. But in the mean time he will have the best or none. I do witness here to every soul of you in his name, that if he have not the sovereignty, and be not nearer and dearer to your hearts than all the honours, and riches, and pleasures of the world, he is not, he will not be, he cannot be your God. And if he be not thy God, thou wilt be godless, as thou art ungodly ;

thou wilt be without his help, as he was without thy heart.

Well, this is the first article of my charge against every one of you that hath not crucified the world, you are idolators and traitors against the God of heaven. And he that would have no God, deserves to be no man, and worse; and shall either by repentance wish with groans that he had never been a worldling and a neglecter of God, or else in hell with groans shall wish that he had never been a man. As the first commandment is the fundamental law, and informeth all the obligations of the particular precepts following; so idolatry which is against that commandment, is the fundamental crime, and is the life of all the rest. He that would overthrow the godhead, would overthrow all the world.

2. The next article of my charge is this: You are guilty of most perfidious covenant-breaking with God. Did you not in your baptism, solemnly by your parents, renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and promise to fight against them to the end of your life under the banner of Christ? And have you performed that vow? No; you have turned treacherously to the enemy that you renounced, and fought for the world and the flesh, against the word and the Spirit of Christ. And if you renounce your baptismal covenant, you renounce in effect the benefits of that covenant. And if God deal with you as perfidious covenant-breakers, thank yourselves.

3. Moreover, you are guilty of debasing your human nature, and so of wronging God that made it, and is the Owner of it. God made you not as brutes, that are capable of no higher things than to eat, and drink, and play, and die, and there is an end of them. But he made you capable of an everlasting life of glory with himself. And as he suiteth all his works to their uses and ends, so did he suit the nature of man to his immortal state. As we were made by God, we were fitted and disposed to everlasting things. And you have turned your hearts to the vanities of the world, and set your mind on them as your happiness, as if you had no greater things to mind. Objects do either ennoble or debase the faculties according as they are. That is the vilest creature which is made for the vilest uses and ends, or

employs himself in such. And that is the most excellent creature which is exercised about the most excellent object. God made you for no less than his everlasting praises, before his face, among his angels; and you have so far debased your own nature, as to root like swine, in earth and dung, and to live like brutes that have not an immortal state to mind. How will you answer this dishonour done to the workmanship of God? that you should blot out his image, and employ your souls against his laws, and live as moles and worms in the earth. He put you on earth but as travellers towards heaven; and you have taken up your home in the way, and forgotten your end and resting-place.

4. The next part of your guilt is, that you have perverted the use of all the creatures, and turned the works and mercies of God against himself. He gave them all to you, to lead you to himself, and to furnish you for his service. He made this world to be a glass in which you might see the Maker, and a book in which you might read his name and will. And will you overlook him, and forget the end and use of all? What shame and pity is it that men should live in the world, and not know the use of it! That they should see such a beauteous frame, and not understand its principal signification! That they should daily converse with so many creatures, which all proclaim the name of God, and with one accord declare his praise, and yet that this language should be so little understood! Like an illiterate man in a library, that seeth many thousand books, and knows not a word that is in any of them. Or like an ignorant man in an apothecary's shop, that seeth the drugs, but knoweth not what they are good for, nor how to use any of them, if he had the greatest need. The poorest courage, and smallest pittance of these earthly things might be a greater blessing to you, if you could understand their use and meaning, than all the world be to him that understands it not. Your possessions in themselves, if you have not God in them, are but the very corpse or carcase of a blessing! The life of them is wanting! And without the life they will but trouble you. For you have the burden without the use. Your horse will carry you, while he hath life and health; but take away his life once, and you must carry him if you will have him any further. Verily, it is no wiser

a trick to make a stir in the world, and seek the profits and pleasures of it without God, than it is to ride a dead horse, where you may spur long enough before you are one mile further on your way. While your friend is living, you may delightfully converse with him; but when he is dead, you will have little pleasure in his company; the corpse of a learned man will actually teach you no more than a block. Were it the wife of your bosom, who through prudence and beauty were never so lovely to you, when her carcase is left without a soul, you will hasten to bury it out of your sight, and would be loath so much as to keep it in your house, much less in your bed and bosom as heretofore. He that knoweth not that God is the life and soul of our blessings, doth neither know what God is, nor what a blessing is. They are but the empty casks and shells, and not the blessings themselves without him. You have the burden, and not the benefit. You must carry them, but they can do nothing to the supporting of you. It is the absence of God, that denominateth them vanity and vexation; and it is he only that can make them strengthening and consolatory. That must have some life in it, that must be 'pabulum vitæ,' and must sustain our lives. Souls cannot feed upon mere terrene, corporeal things, any more than the body upon mere spirituals. As we have both a soul and a body to be sustained, so have we a sustenance suitable to them both; even the creature animated by God, or God in and by the creature.

How great then is your sin, that destroy your blessings by depriving them of their life, and that in a sort destroy the world as to yourselves, by separating it from its soul! and so most heinously injure God, and rob yourselves of the comfort of all, and turn your blessings into burdens, and your helps into hindrances and snares to your souls. Have you lived so long in the school of the world, yea, and of the church too, where you have not only the library of nature, but supernatural revelations to teach you to understand it, and yet do you not know a word or letter? You do but lose and abuse the creatures of God, if you see him not in them; and if you be not in the use of them led up to himself. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge: there is no speech or

language where their voice is not heard ; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world," (Psal. xix. 1—3.); and yet poor carnal wretches will not understand them. "All the works of God do praise him ; for he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," (Psal. cxlv. 10. 17.); and yet the wicked will not understand. O how many talents must the ungodly be accountable for, as having neglected them, and perverted them from the prescribed use ! Every creature that you see is a teacher of divine things to you ; and you shall answer for your not learning by them. Every creature is an herald sent from heaven to proclaim the will of your Maker, and your duty ; and you gaze upon the messenger, and note his garb, and hear his voice, and never understand or regard his message. I would you did but consider what you lose by this your folly ! and what life and sweetness there is in creatures which the heavenly believer draweth forth, and you have no taste of ; and till the Spirit of sanctification have fitted you to such a work, you are never like effectually to taste it. For it is not every fly that can suck honey from the sweetest flower, though the bee can do it from that which we call a stinking weed. An ignorant countryman hath a meadow that aboundeth with a variety of herbs ; he can make no other use of them than to feed his cattle with them ; or if he walk into his garden, he can only smell the sweetness of a flower ; but a skilful physician that knows their use, can thence fetch a medicine that may be a means to save his life. But the believing soul can yet go further, and there find that which may further his salvation. If you have a lease of your lands, or a pardon for your life, that is written in an excellent character ; there is a great deal of difference between another man's delight in viewing the character, and yours in considering of the security you have by it for estate or life. But the difference is much greater in our present case, between those that have only the superficial sweetness and beauty of the creature, to the pleasing of the flesh, and those that have God in it, to the spiritual refreshing of their souls. Believe it, sirs, it is not a small sin to pervert the whole creature (that is within our reach) to a use so contrary to that which it was appointed to, as foolish worldlings do ; not only to lose that use and benefit of the creatures which we might have, but to turn all into poison

and death to ourselves! Not only to rob God of that love, and honour, and service which they should procure him, but also to turn all this upon themselves; I tell you this will prove no venial sin.

5. And your guilt herein is further aggravated, in that you do hereby, as much as in you lieth, frustrate the works of creation and redemption. For God made all things for himself, and you use nothing for him. The Redeemer hath reprieved and restored the creature for its primitive use, that God might yet have the glory of his works, and yet you will not give it him; but when you pretend to know God, you glorify him not as God, but become vain in your imagination, your foolish hearts being darkened as Paul tells them, Rom. i. 21. And what doth that man deserve that would, as to the use, destroy all the world, and frustrate all God's works both of creation and redemption?

6. Herein also you are guilty of enmity against God. For this is the greatest wrong that an enemy can do him, to rob him of the glory of his goodness and power, and to prefer his creatures, as if they were more amiable than himself. You cannot dethrone him from his glory; but you may possibly deny him the preeminence in your hearts. You may deny him the kingdom within you; but you cannot dispossess him of his eternal power or kingdom without you. The worst enemy that God hath, can do him no harm; but this is no thanks to you; he will not be beholden to you for it. You may as truly shew your enmity by wronging, as by hurting. And what greater injury can you offer to the Almighty, than to set up the silly creature in his stead, and give it that love and service which is his due?

7. Moreover you are guilty of wilful self-murder; you choak yourselves with that which should be your food; you turn your daily blessings to your bane, by dropping your poison into the cup of mercies, which bountiful Providence putteth into your hands. There is not a surer way in the world to undo you, than by turning to the creature, and forsaking God. You cry for more of the world, and you are unsatisfied till you have it; and when you have it, you do but destroy your souls with it, by giving it your hearts, which must be given only unto God. What a stir do men make for temptation and destruction. What cost and pains are men at to purchase them an idol, and to make provision

for the flesh, to satisfy its desires, when they confess it to be the greatest enemy of their souls. Like a man that would give all that he hath for a coal of fire to put into the thatch; even such is your desires after the world, and the use you make of it.

What abundance of precious time and labour do you lose, which might and should be better spent! Doth not this world take up the most of your care, and strength, and time? You are about it early and late; it is the first and last, and almost always in your thoughts. It findeth you so much to do, that you have scarce any time so much as to mind the God that made you, or to seek to escape the everlasting misery which is near at hand. It hath taken up so much of your hearts, that when God should have them in any holy duty, or service for his church, you are heartless. When you shall see your accounts cast up to your hands (as shortly you shall see it, though you will not now be persuaded to do it yourselves), and when you shall there see, how many thoughts the world had, in comparison of God; and how many hours were laid out upon the world, when God's service was cast by for want of time; and how near the creature was to your heart, while God as a stranger stood at the door; and in a word, how the world was your daily business, while the matters of God stepped in but now and then upon the by; you will then confess that you laboured in vain, and that your life and labour should have been better employed. Hath God given you but a short, uncertain life, and laid your everlasting life upon it; and will you cast all away upon these transitory delights? How short a time have we for so great a work! and shall the world have all? O that you did but know to how much greater advantage you might have spent this time and labour in seeking God and an endless glory! One thing is needful; make sure of that; and waste not the rest of your days in vanity. What wise man would spend so precious a thing as time is, upon that which he knows will leave him in repentings that ever it was so spent? The world doth rob poor sinners of their time; but when they see it is gone, and they would fain have a little of that time again, to make preparation for their everlasting state, it is not all the world then that can bring them back one hour of it again. Certainly such

a loss of time and labour is no small aggravation of a worldling's sin.

9. You are also guilty of the high contempt of the kingdom of glory, while you prefer these transitory things before it. Your hearts and lives speak that which you are ashamed to speak with your tongues. You are ashamed to say that earth is better for you than heaven, or that your sin is better for you than the favour of God ; but your lives speak it out. If you think not your present condition better for you than heaven, why do you choose and prefer it ? and why do you more carefully and laboriously seek the things of earth, than the heavenly glory ? If your child would sell his inheritance for a cup of ale, you would think he set light by it. And if he would part with father and mother for the company of a beggar or a thief, you would say he had no great love to you. And if you will venture your part in heaven for the pleasures of sin, and will part with God for the matters of this world, would you have him think that you set much by his kingdom or his love ? O the unreasonableness of sin ! the madness of worldly, fleshly men ! Is it indeed more desirable to prosper in their shops, their fields, and their pleasures for a few days or years, than everlastingly to live in the presence of the Lord ? Shall Christ purchase a kingdom at the price of his blood ; and offer it us freely, and shall we prefer the life of a brute before it ? Shall God offer to advance so mean a creature to a heavenly station among his angels ; and shall we choose rather to wallow in the dung of our transgressions ? Take heed, lest as you are guilty of Esau's folly, you also meet with Esau's misery ! and the time should come, that you shall find no place for repentance, that is, for recovery by repentance, though you seek it with tears. Contempt of kindness is a provoking thing, for it is the height of ingratitude. And especially when it is the greatest kindness that is contemned. As it will be the everlasting employment of the saints, to enjoy that felicity, and to admire and praise that infinite love which caused them to enjoy it, so will it be the everlasting misery of the damned, to be deprived of that felicity, and to think of their folly in the unthankful contempt of it ; and of the excellency of that kingdom which thus they did contemn. God sets before you earth

and heaven. If you choose earth expect no more. And hereafter remember that you had your choice.

10. To make short of the rest of the aggravation of your sin, and sum it up in a word: Your love of the world is the sum of all iniquity. It virtually or actually containeth in it the breach of every command in the decalogue. The first commandment, which is the foundation of the law, and especially of the first table, is broken by it, while you make it your idol, and give it the esteem, and love, and service that is due to God. The second, third, and fourth commandments it disposeth you to break. While your hearts and ends are carnal and worldly, the manner of your service will be so, and you will suit your religion to the will of men, and your carnal interest, and not to the will and word of God. The name and holy nature of God is habitually contemned by you, while you set more by your worldly matters than by him. His holy days you ordinarily violate, and his ordinances you do hypocritically abuse, while your hearts are upon your covetousness or sensual delights; and are far from him while you draw near him with your lips. Worldliness will make you even break the bonds of natural obligations, and be unthankful to your own parents, disobedient to your superiors, unfaithful to your equals, and unmerciful to your inferiors. There is no trusting a worldling, he will sell his friend for money. He careth not to wrong your life, your chastity, estate, and name, for his lustful, ambitious, and covetous desires. For he directly breaketh the tenth commandment, which is the sum of the second table, requiring us to regard the welfare of our neighbour, and not to maintain a private, selfish interest against it. So true is that of Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 10., "The love of money is the root of all evil." As adhering to God is the sum of all duty and spiritual goodness, so adhering to the creature instead of God, is the sum of all wickedness and disobedience.

And seeing all this is so, I require you here in the name of God, to cast out this wickedness, and cherish it no longer. Bring forth that traitor that hath dethroned God in your hearts, and exalted itself, and let it die the death. It subverteth commonwealths, and all societies; it causeth perjury, perfidiousness, and sedition; it raiseth wars, and sets the world together by the ears; it overturneth all right order, and strikes at the heart of morality itself, and would make

every man a wolf or tiger to his brother. It is a murderer of your own souls; and the cause of cruelty both to the souls and bodies of others. It is a liar that promiseth what it cannot perform. It is a cheater that would deceive you of your everlasting happiness; and entice you into hell, by pretences of furthering your profits and contents. It causeth parents to neglect the souls of their children, and children to wish the death of their parents, or be weary of them, or disregard them; and causeth lawsuits and contentions between brother and brother, and neighbour and neighbour; and fills the heart with rancour and malice; and turneth families and kingdoms into confusion. It maketh people hate their teachers, and too many ministers to neglect their flocks. It adulterously seeketh to vitiate the spouse of Christ, and take up the heart which was reserved for himself. It robbeth him of his honour, of our affections, and obedience; and sacrilegiously defaceth the temple of the Holy Ghost. It will not allow God one free thought, nor full affection of your heart, nor one hour entirely improved for his honour.

This is the world: and thus it is used by sensual men. Judge now whether it deserve not to die the death, and to be cast out of your souls; and whether we have not reason to say, "Crucify it, crucify it?" Ask me no more what evil it hath done! You see it is such an enemy to the God of heaven, that if you cherish it, and let it live in your hearts, you are not friends to Christ or your salvation. Away with it then without any more ado; and use it as the world did use your Lord; and as it nailed him on the cross, so go to his cross for a nail to fasten it, and for strength to crucify it, that you may be victors and super-victors through him that loved you, and overcame the world for you. Choose not to be slaves, when you may be freemen and triumphers. Take warning by all that have gone before you. Serve not a master that casteth off all his servants in distress, and leaveth them all in fruitless complaints of its unprofitableness! Think not to speed well where never man sped well before you; nor to find content where none have found it. If all the world's followers complain of it at the parting, take warning by them, and foresee the end. Find out one man that ever was made happy by the world (in a true and durable happiness), before you venture your own hopes and hap-

piness in such hands. Put not yourselves and all that you have in such a leaking vessel that never yet brought man safe to shore. Will neither the experience of your own lives, nor the experience of all the world before you, delivered in the history of so many thousand years, be a sufficient warning to you to avoid the snare? What will you take then for a sufficient warning? Were not reason captivated, one would think that a walk into a churchyard might satisfy you. The sight of a grave or a dead body should kill and disgrace the world in your eyes. Do you see where you must lie, and what that flesh which you so regard must be turned to, and what is the most that can be expected from the world, and in how poor and despicable a case it will then leave you? and yet will you dote upon it, and neglect and lose the life everlasting for it? Will you be wilfully seduced by the vain-glory and ostentation of blinded worldlings, when you are certain beforehand that they will not be long of the mind themselves, that now they are? Name me one man if you can, that rejoiceth in his worldly prosperity now, and speaketh well of it, who rejoiced in it, and spoke well of it two hundred years ago! It is a child indeed that would have a house builded by every fine flower that he seeth in his way, and forgetteth his home, his friends, and his inheritance! when it is two to one but the flower will be withered before his house be finished, and the pleasure will not answer the trouble and cost. Indeed, if the world were a better place, than that which we are going to, I could not then blame any to desire to keep it as long as they can. And yet if it were so, the certainty of our removal should make us less regard it, and look more to the place where we must evermore remain. Much more when our home doth exceed this world in worth, as much as in continuance. It is folly enough to set a man's heart upon the fairest inn that is in his way; but to prefer a swine-sty before a palace where his father dwells, and his inheritance doth lie, is somewhat worse than mere folly; and it is meet that such be used according to their choice. It is meet indeed that we be patient in our wilderness, and murmur not at God for the sufferings that it casteth us upon. But to love it better than the promised land, and to think or speak hardly of our happiness itself, and those that would lead us to it, this is unreasonable. The Israelites were never

so foolish as to build cities in the wilderness, as desiring to make them their fixed habitations ; but contented themselves with moveable tents. What a curse were it if God should put you off with earth, and give you no other treasure and felicity, but what it can afford ? You might well then look on your inheritance as Hiram did on his twenty cities in Galilee (1 Kings ix. 11, 12.), and disliking it, call it the Land of Cabul. It is the description of miserable wicked men to have their portion in this life ; Psal. xvii. 14. Suppose you had the most that you can expect in the world ; would you be contented with this as your portion ? What is it that you would have, and which you make such a stir for ? Would you have larger possessions, more delightful dwellings, repute with men, the satisfying of your lusts ? &c. Dare you take all this for your portion, if you had it ? Dare you quit your hopes of the life to come for such a portion ? You dare not say so, nor do it expressly, though you do it impliedly and in effect. O do not that which is so horrid, that your own hearts dare not own without trembling and astonishment !

I pray you tell me ; do you think that a sufficient portion which the devil himself would give you, if he could, or is willing you should have ? He is content that you enjoy your lusts and pleasures ; he is willing to let you have the honours and fulness of the world, while you are on earth. He knows that he can this way best deal with your consciences, and please you in his service, and quiet you awhile, till he hath you where he would have you. He that told Christ of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, would doubtless have given him them, if it had been in his power, to have obtained his desire. Though you think it too dear to part with your wealth or pleasures for heaven, and to be at the labour of a holy life to obtain it ; the devil would not think it too dear to give you all England, nor all the world, if it were in his power, that thereby he might keep you out of heaven ; and he is willing night and day, to go about such kind of work, that may but attain his ends in devouring you. If he were able, he would make you all kings, so that he could but keep you thereby from the heavenly kingdom. Alas, he that tempteth you to set light by heaven, and prefer this world before it, doth better know himself to his sorrow, the worth of that everlasting

glory which he would deprive you of, and the vanity of that which he thrusteth into your hands. As our merchants that trade with the silly Indians, when they have persuaded them to take glass, and pieces of broken iron, and brass, and knives, for gold or merchandize of great value, they do but laugh at their folly when they have deceived them, and say, 'What silly fools be these to make such an exchange:' For the merchants know the worth of things, which the Indians do not. And so is it between the deceiver of souls, and the souls that he deceiveth. When he hath got you to exchange the love of God and the crown of glory, for a little earthly dung and lust; he knows that he hath made fools of you, and undone you by it for ever.

Do you not think yourselves, that it is abominable madness in those witches that make a covenant with the devil, and sell their souls to him for ever, on condition they may have their wills for a time? I know you will say it is abominable folly. And yet most in the world do in effect the very same. God hath assured them that they must forsake him or the world, and that they must not love the world if they would have his love; nor look for a portion in this life if they will have any part in the inheritance of the saints: he offers them their choice, to take the pleasures of earth or heaven; and satan prevaileth with them to make choice of earth, though they are told by God himself, that they lose their salvation by it.

And here you may see what advantage satan gets, by playing his game in the dark, and doing his work by other hands, and keeping out of sight himself, and deceiving men by plausible pretences. Should he but appear himself in his own likeness, and offer poor worldlings to make such a match with them, how much would the most of you tremble at it, and abhor it. And yet now he doth the same thing in the dark, you greedily embrace it. If you should but see or hear him, desiring you to put your hands to such a covenant as this is, 'I do consent to part with the love of God, and all my hopes of salvation, so I may have my pleasures, and wealth, and honour till I die.'" Sure if you be not besides yourselves, you would not, you durst not put your hands to it. Why then will you now put both hand and heart to it; when he plays his game underboard, and implicitly by his temptations doth draw you to the same consent? What do

the most of the world but prefer earth before heaven, through the course of their lives? They prefer it in their thoughts, and words, and deeds. It hath their sweetest and freest thoughts, and words, and their greatest care, and diligence, and delight. And what then do these men do, but sell their salvation for the vanities of the world? Believe it, sirs, if you understood the word of God, and understood sathan's temptations, and understood your own doings, you would see that you do no less than thus make sale of your precious souls. And it is not your false hopes, that for all this you shall be saved, when you can keep the world no longer, that will undo the bargain. If the law of the land do punish murder and theft with death, he that enticeth you to commit the crime, doth entice you to cast away your life; and it will not save you to say, 'I had hoped that I might have played the thief or murderer, and yet be saved.'

O sirs, if you knew but half as well what you sell and cast away, as the devil doth that tempts you to it, sure you durst never make such a match, nor pass away such an inheritance, for a little earthly smoke and dust.

Use of Exhortation.

Men, fathers, and brethren, hearken to the word of exhortation which I have to deliver to you from the Lord. I know that this world is near you, and the world to come is out of sight. I know the flesh which imprisoneth those souls, is so much inclined to these sensual things, that it will be pleased with nothing else; but yet I am to tell you from the word of the Lord, that this world must be forsaken before it forsake you, and that you must vilify and set light by it, and your heart and hopes must be turned quite another way, and you must live as men of another world, or you will undo yourselves, and be lost for ever. If you have thought that you might serve God and mammon, and heaven and earth might both be your end and portion, and God and the world might both have your hearts, I must acquaint you that you are dangerously mistaken. Unless you have two hearts, one for God, and one for the world; and two souls, one to save, and one to lose. But I doubt when one soul is condemned, you will not find another to be saved. I must plainly tell you, that the case of multitudes, not only of the sottish vulgar, but of persons of ho-

nour, and worshipful gentlemen, is so palpably miserable in the eyes of impartial, discerning men, that we are obliged to lament it. We hear you speak as contemptibly of the world in an affected discourse, as any others; but we see you follow it with unwearied eagerness; you dote upon it; you contrive and project how you may enjoy it; you think you have got some great matter when you have obtained it; a filthy stir you make in the world, some of you, to the disquiet of all about you, that you may be richer or greater than you are. It takes up your heart, your time, your strength; and visibly it is the very work you live for, and the great game that you play, and the main trade that you drive on; and all your religious affairs come in but on the by, and God is put off with the leavings of the world; and if you are low in the world, or miss of your desires, and suffer in the flesh, you whine and repine, as if you had lost your God and your treasure. If you will deceive yourselves by denying this, that bettereth not your case. Neither God, nor any wise man that seeth your worldly lives, and how much you set by worldly things, and how little good you do with your wealth, and how much the flesh and your posterity have as devoted unto them, and how little God hath devoted unto him; I say, no wise man that seeth this will believe that you are mortified, heavenly men. I do here proclaim to you this day, from the word of the Lord, that "this your way is your folly" (Psal. xlix. 13. Luke xii. 20.), and that you are at present in a damnable condition, that you are the "enemies of God, whoever of you are the friends to the world," and that if "you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you" (1 John ii. 15.), and that you must, in affection and resolution, forsake all that you have in the world, and look for a portion in the world to come, or you are not Christians indeed, nor can be saved; Luke xiv. 33. It would grieve the heart of a believing man, to see how desperately many civil, ingenuous gentlemen, and others, delude and destroy themselves insensibly. You will I hope all cry shame upon a common swearer, drunkard, or whoremonger: you will hang a thief, murderer, or a traitor. But you seem not sensible of the misery of your own condition, that are perhaps in a more dangerous case than these. I beseech you consider! Is not that the most sinful and dangerous state, where God hath least of the heart, and the

creature hath most? What know you, if you know not this? Why it is apparent, that there is less love to the world, in many a one of the forementioned wretches, than in many civil gentlemen, that live in good reputation in their country, and little suspect so much mischief by themselves. That is the most wicked man, that hath in his heart the strongest interest which is opposite unto God; and all that is not subordinate, is opposite. Sin hath not so deep and strong an interest in some murderers, that kill a man in a passion; in some swearers that get nothing by it, but swear in a passion; or in some thieves that steal in necessity, as it hath in many that seem sober and religious. I say again, the greater creature-interest, the more sinful is the estate. Alas, sirs, the abstaining from some of these crimes, and living like civil, religious men, if the world be not crucified to you, and you to it, doth but hide your sin and misery, and hinder your shame and repentance, but not prevent your damnation. Nay, the very interest of the flesh itself, may make you forbear disgraceful sins; and so finally that may be your greater vice, which you so much glory in, and which is materially your duty. All the privilege of your condition is, that you shall serve the devil in more golden fetters, than the poorer and contemned sort of sinners, and that you may be the children of wrath with less suspicion; and that you may go to hell with more credit than the rest; and by your self-deceit, you may keep off the knowledge of your misery, and the disquiet of soul that would follow thereupon, till death make you wiser when it is too late. And is this a benefit to rejoice in? Indeed you have your good things in this life; you may be clothed in the best, and fare deliciously, and when you are in hell torments, where you would be glad of a drop of water, your kindred on earth may nevertheless honour your name, and little suspect or believe your misery. And this is the privilege you have above more disgraced offenders. You leave a better esteem of you on earth, when your souls are in hell; but alas, if a pope should saint you, and his followers pray to you and worship you, as it is possible they may do, this will not ease your torments. I confess I am sensible that this kind of discourse is not very like to please you; but it is not my errand to please, but to profit. For my part, I bear you as much respect, as you are magistrates, or otherwise qualified for

the common good, as others do. But I must deal plainly with you, in hope of your recovery, or at least of the discharge of my soul. I confess to you I look upon a worldly prince, or judge, or justice, or gentleman, or freeholder, yea or minister, as men, as wicked before God, and in as damnable and dangerous a case to their own souls, as the thieves that you burn in the hand and hang. I am far from extenuating their sin and misery; but I am shewing you your own. Your sin may be as deep rooted, and the interest of the world may be more predominant in you than in them. Your lands, and houses, and hopeful posterity, and the other provisions that you have made for your flesh, may have more of your hearts, than the world hath of the heart of a poor prisoner that never had so much to idolize. Believe it, gentlemen, Christ was not in jest, when he so often and earnestly warneth men of your quality of everlasting peril: even more than ever he did adulterers or thieves. It is not for nothing that he tells us how "the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, that it becometh unfruitful;" Luke viii. 14. Matt. xvi. 22. "The Pharisees that were covetous derided Christ when others did believe;" Luke xvi. 14. They cannot be true believers that "receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only" (John v. 44.); that is, who prefer the former. It is not for nothing that Christ assureth you, that "it is as hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, as for a camel to go through a needle's eye." Which, though it be possible, doth plainly shew some extraordinary difficulty; Matt. xix. 23, 24. Such used to go away sorrowful, when they hear of "forsaking all, because they are rich;" Luke xviii. 23. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" James ii. 5. And the Holy Ghost saith not without a cause, that "not many wise men after the flesh; not many mighty, not many noble are called;" 1 Cor. i. 26. "But God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence;" ver. 27—29. It is the common case of prospering worldlings, to play the fool after all God's warnings, and in their

hearts to say, "Soul, take thy rest;" when they know not but "that night their souls may be called for;" Luke xii. 20. O that you would be pleased but considerately to read over those two parables, or histories, chap. xii. 16. xvi. 19. which you have so often read or heard inconsiderately. I beseech you think not we wrong such men, if we rank them with the most notorious sinners. The apostle reckoneth them with the most heinous sinners that should arise in the last days (2 Tim. iii. 2. 4.); "Covetous, and lovers of their own selves, and lovers of pleasures more than God," and bids us "turn away from such." And he reckoneth them among such as the church must excommunicate, and with whom a Christian may not eat; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. And with the notorious wicked men that "shall not enter into the kingdom of God;" chap. vi. 10. Eph. v. 5. It is a sin "not to be once named among the saints;" ver. 3. In a word, if you are worldly or covetous, you are certainly wicked, and abhorred by God, how highly soever you may be esteemed of men. "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth;" Psal. x. 3. If yet you think I use you unmannerly in speaking so hardly of you, hear the Holy Ghost a little further: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days;" James v. 1—3. And mentioning their oppression, he addeth, "Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter." In a word, if Christ called Peter himself a satan, when he would have had him favour himself, and avoid suffering, because "he savoured not the things of God, but of men;" Matt. xvi. 22. You may see that we call you not so bad as you are.

I shall now take the freedom to come a little nearer to you, and close with you upon the main of my business. Poor worldling, I come not hither to beat the air, nor to waste an hour in empty words; but it is work that I come upon. An displeasing work to flesh and blood; even to take away your profits, and pleasures, and honours from you! To take away the world from you, and all that you have

therein ! Not out of your hands, but out of your hearts ! Not against your wills (for that is impossible), nor by irresistible force (I would I could do that), but by procuring your own consent, and persuading you to cast them away yourselves. I cannot expect the consent of your flesh, and therefore I will not treat with it ; but if yet you have any free use of your reason in matters of this nature, look back upon the reasons that I have before laid down, and tell me whether you see not sufficient cause to forsake this world, and betake yourselves to another course of life, and look another way for your felicity ? This then is the upshot of all that I have been saying to you, and this is the message that I have to you from God ; to require you presently to renounce this world, and unfeignedly to despise it, and proclaim war against it, and to come over to him that is your rightful Lord, and will be your true and durable rest. What say you ? Will you be divorced from the world and the flesh this day ? and take up with a naked Christ alone, and the hopes of a heavenly felicity which he hath promised ? Will you bring forth that traitor that hath had your hearts and lives so long, and let him die the death ? Shall the world this day be crucified to you, and you to it ? I am to let you know, that this is the thing that God expecteth, and nothing less will serve the turn, nor will any worldly kind of religiousness bring you to salvation. This world and flesh are enemies to God, and you have been guilty of high treason against his Majesty by harbouring them, and serving them so long. And I am moreover to let you know that God will have them down one time or other ; either by his grace or by his judgment ! Had you rather that death and hell should make the separation, than that saving grace should do it ? Will you still hide it as sugar under your tongue ? Will you obstinately cleave to it, when you know its vanity, and the mischief that such contempt of God will bring ? If you do so, God will embitter it to you in the end ! And he will make it gall in your mouths, and torment to your hearts, and you shall spit it out, and be forced to confess, that it is no better than you were told. I do charge you therefore in the name of the Lord, that you renounce this world without delay, and presently and effectually crucify it to yourselves. You once did it by your parents in baptism, and you have proved false to that pro-

fession. Now do it by yourselves, and stand to what you do. If it had not been a part of Christianity, you had not been called to do it then. And therefore you may understand, that it is but to be Christians indeed that I persuade you. A Christian worldling is as mere a fiction as a Christian infidel. Enter now into your own hearts with a reforming zeal. It should be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Down then with every idol that is there erected. Whip out the buyers and sellers, and overthrow the money-tables, and suffer it not to be made a den of thieves. Down with your Dianas! Though the world worship her; God and his sanctified ones despise her. What the ungodly say of your Zion, we say of your Babel, Down with it, raze it, even to the foundation. It is a thing to be destroyed. Happy is he that dasheth the brats of worldly concupiscence against the stones; Psal. cxxxvii. 7—9. Mortify your members that are on earth. Crucify this your pretended king. Away with the world out of your hearts, it is not fit that it should there live.

Honourable, worshipful, and all well beloved; I beseech you hear me not as if I speak but words of course to you, or read you but a formal lecture. I mean as I speak, and I profess to the faces of you all, that either the world and flesh, or you shall die. Kill it, or it will kill you; and Christ will destroy both it and you. Think not any more of a fleshly, earthly minded man, that hath his affections on this world, as a tolerable sinner of the smallest size. I tell you, the devil may as soon be saved, as a man that liveth and dieth a sensualist. I mean not only the notorious misers, or the infamous drunkards, gamesters or idle gallants; but all men, even the most civil or seemingly religious, in whose hearts a worldly, fleshly interest is predominant; if you are such, your honours and riches will not keep you from being firebrands of hell. Down therefore with the world, and set up God alone in your souls.

I cannot but understand, that I am like to be an unwelcome messenger to you, that come of such an ungrateful errand. If I came as the Levellers or Quakers, to cry down your pride and worldliness, with such mixtures of distraction as might make you laugh at me as a self-conceited, fantastical person, perhaps it would trouble you less to hear me: for you look upon them as histrionical actors. Quakers

do but jest with you, or harden you by their vanity; but we are in good sadness, and God himself is in good sadness with you. We must have your worldly interest out of the very hearts of you; Christ will have your heart-blood for it, if he shall not have it.

And here you may see, that it is no wonder if the serious, faithful ministers of Christ, be men detested by most of the world, even of professed Christians themselves. For, alas! what an errand is it that God doth send us on! If I should take the crown from the prince's head, and tread it in the dirt, what must I expect? If I came to take away your honours, or your estates, your houses, lands or money, what must I expect? Do you not prosecute and hang thieves, for robbing you of some of these? Why, though I do less in some respects, it is more that I am sent to do in other respects. Though we take not the prince's crown from his head, we must take it from his heart. Though we take not the money out of your purses, nor your goods out of your houses, nor your houses out of your possessions, we must attempt to take them out of your hearts. No wonder then if we be hated of all such; for at the heart it is that the world is sweetest to you; there it is nearest and dearest to you; and there is your carnal interest most deeply rooted. To be let blood in the very heart, will be more grievous to you than in the hand. And yet so it must be, that the heart-blood of worldly interest may be let out in the crucifying of it, as the world did let out the heart-blood of Christ. What are all your suits at this assize about, but against one man that robbed you of your money; against another that took your cattle; against another that would deprive you of your estate; and against another that hath wounded your honour and reputation; and another that somehow provoked you to revenge, by contradicting your will. What wonder then if you should all turn your spleen against me, that would take, not one of these, but all, and that from you all, and that from your very hearts! The flesh would be all, and have all; or else it were not the chiefest idol: no marvel then if it storm, when we would take all from it.

And yet let me tell you, to abate your indignation, that though we talk of casting down your temple, we add withal, that it shall be built again in three days: and the casting of it down will tend to its greater glory. The world will be

more honourable and useful to you when it is crucified, and the flesh when it is subjected, than now they be; but of that more anon.

Object. 'O but,' saith the carnal heart, 'have my honours and dignities cost me so dear; have I been so long in getting my riches, and shall I now part with all for your speeches? And do you think I am such a fool as to be worded out of them? Soft and fair; I came not by them so easily, nor will I so easily part with them, nor with the content and comfort that my heart hath in them.'

Answ. Because that worldlings think themselves so wise, and put such a face of confidence on their dotage, I shall yet draw nearer you, and reason the case a little further with you, and to that end I shall propound these following questions, desiring your serious answer.

Quest. 1: Because you presume to call it folly, to part with all at Christ's command, tell me, whether is God or you the wiser, and whose judgment is most fit to determine which is the wisest way? Who are like to be the fools indeed? those that you call so, or that God calleth so? Sure you should easily be resolved of this; for if you be wiser than God, then you are gods, and God is no longer God. For he that is wisest and best, is God. And, methinks, as bad and as mad as you are, you should not be so mad yet as to say or think that you are gods, or that you are wiser than God. Well then, hold but there, and then let us consider, whether God and you be both of a mind about the matters of the world; Psal. xlix. 13. When he hath described the life of a prosperous worldling, he saith, "This their way is their folly: yet do their posterity approve their sayings." And in Luke xii. 20. we find Christ's censure on such a one as you, that said within himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry:" to whom God saith, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" And that you may learn to make a due application of this, and not think it is nothing to you, Christ addeth, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." Where you may note the exact description of a graceless worldling, such as throughout this discourse we mean: he is one that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God,

as all the sanctified are. The difference lieth in the matter and end, or use of riches. The worldling layeth up earthly treasure, the sanctified man layeth up a treasure in heaven with God. The worldling is rich for himself, and all that he parteth with for God's service or the poor, is but the leavings of the flesh, and that which it can spare when its own desires are satisfied, (for so much an epicure may part with to good uses); but the sanctified doth employ his riches for God, as being rich to him, and not to his carnal self.

You see by this time, who they be that are the fools in God's account. And that though "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke xvi. 8.); yet "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men;" 1 Cor. iii. 19. i. 20. 25.

And you know that it is Christ that requireth you to forsake all that you have for him; and dare you say that Christ commandeth you to be fools? Is not that the wisest way which he requireth?

Object. 'But Christ would not have us cast away that which he giveth us, but only rather to forsake it, than to forsake him: and that I would do.'

Answ. But if you forsake it not first in affection and resolution, you will never forsake it actually, when he calls you to it; though you may be confident you should, while you look not to be put to it. In your hearts all must be now forsaken, though you may keep some in your hands until God require it. 2. And even in prosperity you must devote your wealth to God, and use it more for him than for yourselves, if you will prove yourselves to be his servants.

Quest. 2. 'My second question to you is this; You that are so loath to part with the world, and be crucified to it, tell me, what hath it done for you? that you should be so fond of it, and that it should seem worthy of such estimation and affection? Hath it not put you to more care and sorrow than it is worth? It never gave you solid peace! It never made you acceptable to God! You are not a jot better when you are rich, than when you are poor, unless grace do that for you that riches cannot; nay, and grace must do it not only without, but against your riches. All that the

world can do for you, is but to satisfy your sensual appetite, and by the superfluity to please a covetous mind. And is this matter of so great worth? A beast may have his sensual appetite as well as you: and if man be better than a beast, do you think he is not capable of a better and higher delight than beasts? Will you call yourselves men and Christians, and yet take up with the pleasures of a brute, and there place your happiness? If a drunkard have a hundred barrels of ale or wine more than he can drink, this doth not so much as please his appetite, but only his fancy: so if you have never so much riches more than your flesh itself hath use for, this only pleaseth a covetous fancy. All that you enjoy is but so much as may satisfy the lusts of your flesh. And I pray you tell me, whether you do not yourselves believe, that a sober, temperate, heavenly Christian doth live as comfortable a life as you? And, whether they have not more peace in their minds without your sinful, sensual delights, than you have with them? Indeed it is but the distemper of your minds that makes that so pleasant to you, which another that is well in his wits would be weary of; as the swine takes pleasure to tumble in the mire, which a wise man would not do. Do you not sin against your own experience? Have you not found that the world is an unsatisfactory thing, and cannot help you in a day of trouble? And yet will you stick to it?

Quest. 3. ' My next question is, What hath the world done for any other, that should persuade you to set so much by it as you do? Did it ever save a soul; or heal a soul; or make a man truly happy at the last? Look back in any credible records, to the beginning of the world, and down to this day, and tell me where is the man that is made happy by the world? And consider what it hath done for them all! He that had most of it, and made the best of it for the pleasing of his flesh, had but a short taste of sensual pleasures, which quickly left him worse than before; like cold drink to a man in a fit of the ague. And will you so far lay by your reason, as to go against the experience of all the world? Do they all cry out against it as vanity, and yet will you take no warning? Can you think to find that by it that no man ever found before you? What art have you to extract such comforts from the creature, that never man could do till now? It is the shame of them that spent so

much cost, and time, and labour, in seeking that seed of gold which they call the philosopher's stone, because never any that sought it could find it, but have all lost their labour. So is it your far greater shame to run a hazard so much greater, for that which never man from the beginning of the world could find, till now. Solomon went as far as any in the pleasing of his flesh with the fulness of the world, and in the conclusion he passes this sentence on it, that "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Quest. 4. My next question to you is, 'What is it that you do seriously expect from the world for the time to come that should persuade you to stick so close to it as you do?' Some great matter sure you do think it will do for you; or else you would never so esteem it. I pray you tell me what it is? Do you think verily, that it will make you truly happy? Do you expect that it should bring you to heaven? I suppose you do not. What then will it do for you? It will neither prevent a sickness, nor remove it: it cannot take away a toothache, nor a fit of the gout or stone: it will not save you from the jaws of death, nor keep your bodies from rotting in the grave, nor bribe the worms or corruption from devouring them. When your physician tells you that your disease is incurable, and you see that there is no way but one with you, and you must be gone, there is no remedy; if then you cry to the world, it cannot help you: friends cannot save you, riches and honours, houses and lands cannot preserve you; death will obey his will that sendeth it, and you must away. O who would love that, and love it at so dear a rate, which cannot help you in the time of your necessity? Who would serve such a master, such an idol god, as cannot relieve you in the day of your distress? When conscience is awakened, and begins to stir, and gripe you, and the wrath of God doth look you in the face, will your honours ease you? Will your friends deliver you, and give you a solid, lasting peace? You know they will not. You cannot with all the wealth in the world procure the pardon of the smallest sin. You may get the pope's pardon for money, but not God's. You must go to judgment, and if you be worldlings, must be damned for ever for all your wealth. Were you lords of all the world, it would not save your souls from hell: no, nor procure you a drop of water to cool your tongues. What is it then that you expect by this

world? Sure you would never so much love it, and make such a stir for it, if you looked for nothing from it? Why, is it that your flesh may have some satisfaction in the mean time? And is that all? Yea, that is even all. I shall then proceed to the next question.

Quest. 5. 'How long can you say that you shall keep the riches and honours which you possess?' Can you say that they shall be yours this time twelvemonth? or to-morrow? I know you cannot. You know not when you arise in the morning, whether ever you shall lie down again alive. Nor when you lie down at night, whether you shall rise alive. And is a state of such uncertain tenure so valuable? You glory in your honours, and pleasures, and possessions, and for aught you know, within this week, or hour, they may be none of yours. However, you are certain to be deprived of them ere long. It is a dull understanding indeed, that cannot foresee the day when he must be stript of all, and take his final farewell of the world! You know as sure as you shall live, that you must die, and your corpse be laid in the common dust: and whose then shall all your pleasures be? When God calls you away, there is no resisting: or if he call for any of your earthly comforts, there is no withholding. Then keep them if you can. The bones and dust of your forefathers will not say, 'This house and land is mine!' Nor do they retain any impress of their former earthly pleasure and felicity. Alexander could not know his father Philip's bones by the sight of them, nor find any print of the crown upon his skull. If you open the grave and coffin of your grandfathers, you shall find there no great sign of riches or of honour, or any delights. And should you not look on that which will be, even as if it were already? I cannot but take that which certainly will be, in a manner as if it were in being; and that which certainly will not be, as if it were not: for interposing time is such a nothing as makes the difference next to none. What if you might be the emperor of the world to day, and must be as you are again to-morrow, were it desirable, or worthy to be regarded? It disgraceth the greatest felicity on earth, to say, that 'It will have an end; the time is near when it will not be;' as it extenuateth the labours and sufferings of a believer into a kind of nothing, to say that 'they will shortly be at an end.' That which will be nothing, is next to nothing.

Quest. 6. My next question to you is this, 'How do you think you shall value the world, when it is parting from you? Or at the furthest, when you are newly parted from it?' If a man come to you on your deathbed, when you see that there is no hope of life, and ask your opinion then of the world, will you magnify it as now you do? When your spirits are languishing, and your heart fainting, and your body even possessed with pain, if then one should ask you, 'Are the wealth and honours of the world such excellent things as once you deemed them? Do you now think it folly to renounce and forsake them all for Christ?' What would you then say? I beseech you tell me, what think you that you shall then say? Do you think you shall then extol the world, and count them fools that will be persuaded to forsake it? Or rather will you not wish yourselves, 'O that I had forsaken it, before it did forsake me!' Will you not cry out, 'Oh vain world! deceitful world!' and wish you had more regarded the durable riches? I think you will.

Quest. 7. 'What is it that dying men do commonly think and say of the world?' If you can observe what all others say of it, you may partly conjecture what mind you shall be of yourselves. You have sometimes, sure, been about dying men; (if you have not, you were best draw near them hereafter; for "the house of mourning is better than the house of mirth.") Do you not hear them all cry out of the world as a worthless thing? Do you not see how little good it can do them? And will no warning serve you? Surely the judgment of one of these men (much more of many) is more to be valued, than of many that are in health and prosperity, that overvalue the world. You are but in the chace, and know not what it is which you do pursue; but they have overtaken it, and find it but a feather. You are but in the trying of it, but they have tried it already, and have found how little or nothing it can do. You are entangled in the midst of its deceits; but they begin to see it barefaced. Your senses are more violent in withdrawing you, and perverting your judgments; but so are not theirs who are languishing unto death. If you come to one of them, that know they must die within a few days, and tell them that such a lordship is fallen to them, or such honour is bestowed on them, or such a friend hath given them great possessions; how will they regard it? Will they not say, 'Alas, what is

this to me, that am presently to leave the world, and appear before the eternal Judge!' If you then come to them, and offer them such baits as were wont to catch the glutton, or drunkard, or fornicator, do you think they will regard them? Would they not rather cry shame against him that would then entice them to any such thing? Why then should you so value that now, which all the world will vilify at the last.

Quest. 8. You that now say, you are not such fools as to be talked out of your estates, or honours, or delights, and that wilfully stick to them against all that we can say, I pray you tell me, 'Whether you will stand to this at the bar of God?' Will you then own these resolutions and sayings, or will you not? Dare you look the Lord Jesus in the face, and tell him, 'I did well to set more by the world than by thee, and the glory which thou didst promise! I did well to take my pleasure for a time, and to venture my salvation!' You dare not stand to this at judgment; I know you dare not: and will you now insist on that which you dare not stand to? And be of that mind which then you must condemn yourselves? Do you think that this is a reasonable course to be ventured on in so great a matter?

Quest. 9. My next question is this, 'Do you ever mean to repent of your fleshly and worldly mindedness or not?' If you do not, it seems you are far from a recovery. Many a one perisheth with bare, ineffectual purposes of repenting; but those that have not so much as such a purpose, are graceless indeed. But if you do purpose to repent, I would further ask you, Do you think that is a right mind, or a wise course which must be repented of? If it be right and wise, what need you to repent of it? If it be not wise and right, why will you now retain it, yea and wilfully maintain it, against the persuasions of God and man? Doth not this proclaim that you are wilful sinners? And that you know you sin, and yet will do it, even against your own knowledge and conscience? That you know the world to be a deceitful vanity, and yet for all that you will stick to it as long as you can, with the neglect of God, and true felicity? And can you expect mercy and salvation, that wilfully and knowingly do set yourselves against it, and reject it?

Quest. 10. My next question which I desire you to answer is this, 'Do you in good sadness take the world for

your enemy, or for a hindrance to you in the way to heaven? If you do not, why did you in your baptism renounce it, and promise to fight against it? And why have you professed since to stand to that covenant? And how then can you believe the word of God, which so often telleth you, what a hindrance riches and honours are to men's salvation? But if indeed you believe that the world is your enemy and hindrance, why then will you love it, and be impatient if you want it, and take such pleasure in it, and desire to have more of it? Do you love to have your salvation hindered or hazarded? and will you love and long for that which is an enemy to it? I think the way to heaven is hard enough to the best: they need not make it harder than it is, and be at so much labour all their lives to make themselves more enemies, and more work, and to block up the way, while they pretend to walk in it. O the hypocrisy of a carnal heart! How notoriously do men's lives contradict their tongues! When they will call the world their enemy, and vow to fight against it to the death, and at the same time will labour for it, and greedily desire it, as if they could never have enough! That they will make so much of it, as to neglect God himself, and their salvation for it, and make it the greatest care and business of their lives to get and keep it, and all the while profess that they take it for their enemy! This is dissembling beyond all bounds of shame. Remember this when you are impatient of your low estate; or contriving further accommodation to your flesh, or hunting after a full estate. Are these the signs of enmity to the world? Do you hate your salvation, that you so love the hinderers of it? Either live as you profess, or profess as you live.

Quest. 11. Yet further I demand, 'Whether indeed you do intend to renounce your Christianity, and all your hopes of heaven, or not?' If you do, you know whom to blame when you are deprived of it; and I could wish you would first find out some better way, or something that may be of valuable consideration, to repair your loss. But if you say, you have no such intent, I further ask, Why then do you do it? and do it after so much warning? Do you disclaim your Christianity in the open light, and yet say that you intend no such thing? You cannot do it against your will. And that it is in effect a renouncing or denying your Christianity,

yea, and your salvation, is plain; for your Christianity containeth a renouncing of the world; and therefore it is part of our baptismal covenant. If then you return to the world which you renounced, you forsake your Christianity. Had you rather forsake the world, or Christ? One of them you must forsake; for he hath told you that "except you forsake all that you have, you cannot be his disciples;" (Luke xiv.) and that you cannot serve God and mammon. Had you rather renounce the world, or your salvation? One of them you must let go; for God hath said, that "the love of the world is enmity against God;" and that, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If therefore you will still say, you hope you may keep both; what do you less than give God the lie? If you will still adhere to the world, and yet say that you do not renounce your Christianity or salvation, you may as well say, that though you join in arms with open rebels, yet you do not forsake your loyalty to your prince! Or, though you live in adultery, yet you do not forsake your conjugal fidelity and chastity; and that you do not cast away your life, though you take poison, when you know it to be such, or though you commit those crimes which must be punished with death. I beseech you consider well, why you forsake Christ, and why you will destroy yourselves, before you do it past remedy.

Quest. 12. My last question which I desire your answer to is this; 'Do you indeed think that God is not better than the world, and that heaven is not more desirable than earth, and an endless glory than a transitory shadow?' Or is there any comparison to be made between them? Have you considered what a sad exchange you make? O unthankful souls! hath not God done more for you than ever the world did? He made you, and so did not the world! He redeemed you, when none else could do it! He preserveth you, and provideth for you, and all that you have is from his bounty. He can give health to your bodies, peace to your consciences, salvation to your souls, when the world cannot do it. If the world be better than God in prosperity, what makes you call upon God in adversity? When any torment seizeth on your bodies, or death draws near and looks you in the face, then you do not cry, 'O riches, help us! O pleasures or honours, have mercy upon us!' But,

‘O God, have mercy upon us and help us.’ Can none else help you in your distress, and yet will you prefer the creature in your prosperity? Ah poor deluded souls! that follow the world, which will cast you off in your greatest need, and neglect Him that would be faithful to you for ever! The time is coming when you shall cry out, ‘The world hath deceived me! I have laboured for naught!’ But if you had been as true to God as you were to it, he would never have deceived you. He would have received your departed souls, and made you like angels, and raised your bodies to glory at the last, and perpetuated that glory. Will your riches, or pleasures, or honours do this? He would have rescued you from the devouring flames which your inordinate love of the world will bring you to. O miserable change! to change God for the world; it is to change a crown of glory for a crown of thorns; the love of our only friend, for the smiles of deceitful enemies; life for death, and heaven for hell! O what thoughts will arise in your hearts, when you are past the deceit, and under the sad effects of it, and shall review your folly in another world! It will fill your consciences with everlasting horror, and make you your own accusers and tormentors, to think what you lost, and what you had for it; to think that you sold God and your souls, and everlasting hopes for a thing of naught; more foolishly than Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. If the sun, and moon, and stars were yours, would you exchange them for a lump of clay? Well, sinners! if God and glory seem no more worth to you, than to be slighted for a little fleshly pleasures, you cannot marvel if you have no part in them.

If reason and Scripture evidence would serve turn, I dare say you would by this time be convinced of the necessity of being crucified to the world, and the world to you. But sensuality is unreasonable, and no saying will serve with it: like a child that will not let go his apple for a piece of gold. But yet I shall not cease my exhortation, till I have tried you a little further; and if you will not yield to forsake the world, you shall keep it to your greater cost, as you keep it against the clearer light that would convince you of your duty.

1. As you love God, or would be thought to love him, love not the world: for so far as you love it, you love not

him; 1 John ii. 15. As ever you would be found the friends of God, see that you be enemies, and not friends to the world. For the friendship of the world is enmity to him; James iv. 4. You are used to boast that you love God above all; if you do so you will not love the world above him: and then you will not labour and care more for it, than for him: your love will be seen in the bent of your lives: that which you love best, you will seek most, and be most careful and diligent to obtain. As they that love money are most careful to get it; so they that love heaven will be more careful to make sure of that. As they that love their drink and lust will be much in the alehouse, and among those that are the baits and fuel of their lust; so they that love the fruition of God will be much in seeking him and inquiring after him, and much among those that are acquainted with such love, and can further them any way in the accomplishment of their desires. If you love God then, let it be seen in the holy endeavours of your lives, and set your affections on things above, and not on the things that are on earth: for that which you most look after, we must think that you most love. Can you for shame commit adultery with the world, and live with it in your bosoms, and yet say that you love God?

2. As you love your present peace and comfort, see that you love not, but crucify the world. It doth but delude you first, and disquiet you afterwards; like wind in your bowels, which can tear and torment, but cannot nourish you. And if God do love you with a special love, he will be sure to wean you from the world, though to your sorrow. If you do provoke him to lay wormwood on the breasts, and to hedge up your forbidden way with thorns, when you find the smart and bitterness you may thank yourselves. It is the remnant of our folly and our backsliding nature, that is still looking back to the world which we have forsaken, that is the cause of those successive afflictions which we undergo. Did you love the creature less, it would vex you less; but if you will needs set your minds upon them, and be pleasing your worldly, sensual desires, God will turn loose those very creatures upon you, and make them his scourges for the recovery of your wits, and the reducing of your misled, revolting souls. Are you taken up with the hopes of a more plentiful estate; and think you are got into a thriving way?

How soon can God blast and break your expectations? By the death of your cattle, the decay of trading, the false-dealing of those you trust, the breaking and impoverishing of them, by contentious neighbours vexing you with law-suits; by corrupted witnesses, or lawyers that will sell you for a little gain; by ill servants, by unthrifty children; by thieves, or soldiers, or the raging flames; by restraining the dew of heaven, and causing your land to deny its increase, and make you complain that you have laboured in vain. How many ways hath he in a day or an hour to scatter all the heap of wealth that you have been gathering, and to shew you that by sad experience, which you might have known before at easier rates! At the least, if he meddle not with any thing that you have, yet how quickly can he lay his hand upon yourselves, and lay you in sickness, to groan under your pain and sin together: and then what comfort will you have in the world? When head-aches, and back-aches, and nothing can ease you? when pain and languishing make you weary of day and night, and weary of every place, and weary of your best diet, your finest clothes, your merriest companions? Where then is the sweetness and beauty of the world? Then if you look on house, or goods, or lands, how little pleasure find you in any of them? Especially when you know that your departure is at hand, and you must stay here no longer, but presently must away. Oh then what a carcase will all the glory of the world appear! and how sensibly then will you read, or hear, or think of these things, that now in your prosperity are very little moved by the hearing of them!

Is it your children that you set your hearts upon, in inordinate love or care? Why, alas! how quickly can God call them from you by death! and then you will follow them to the churchyard, and lay them in the grave with so much the sadder heart, by how much the more inordinately you loved them. And perhaps God may leave them to be graceless and unnatural, and make that child, by rebellion or unkindness, to be the breaking of your heart, whom you most excessively affected. If it be a wife that you overlove, you know not but they may fall into that peevishness and forwardness, that jealousy or unkindness, that perverseness of tongue, or other distempers, that may make your lives a very burden to you! Do you look after the favour of great

ones? Perhaps you shall feel their injustice and cruelties; and God will be so merciful to you, as to cure you by the means of their frowns, who would else have been infatuated and poisoned by their favours. Is it popular applause that you so much regard? and doth it tickle you to hear of your own commendations? Take heed lest you provoke God to give you such a bitter corrective for your pride, as may make you as vile in the eyes of men, as you desired to be honourable. He can quickly give you such a prick in the flesh, or suffer such a messenger of satan to buffet you, as shall humble you to your sorrow. Perhaps he may let you fall into some disgraceful sin, which the world may ring of to your reproach: or, if you be never so innocent, the tongues of men may make you guilty. If you be as chaste as any man, it is easy for a slanderous tongue to make you incontinent, and to lay some odious blot upon your name, which shall never be wiped off, until the Judge of the world shall justify you. If you give to the poor and other charitable uses as far as you are able, it is not hard for slanderous tongues to make you seem uncharitable and covetous. If you be never so temperate in meat and drink, apparel and recreations, it is easy for a slanderer to make you seem a proud, or luxurious, scandalous man. The weathercock is not more inconstant, nor the waves more impetuous than the giddy, raging vulgar are. And will you repose yourselves in the thoughts of such? They that applaud you in prosperity, and when you fit their turns, will despise you in adversity, and rage against you, as if you were unworthy to live, when once you cross their opinions and desires. If you are so puffed up that you love the praise of men, perhaps God may make you run the gantlet through town and country, and suffer every venomous tongue to speak swords to your heart, and have a lash at your reputation, until you have learned to stand to God's approbation, and to account it a small thing to be judged of man.

Yea, if it be reputation with godly men that you dote upon, it is possible that the tongues even of godly men may become your scourge. Sometimes their ears lie open to the slanders that worse men have raised, and they think it no great sin to report the reproaches which they have heard from others; and sometimes, through temptations, and the remnant of their corruptions, they are ready to be the prin-

cipal authors themselves. If you differ from them in any opinion in which they expect reputation themselves, or if you contradict them, or stand in the way of their sinful designs and ends, or any way diminish their honour with men, you may possibly find that you had but a slippery standing in their esteem. Even godly men in passion may offer you as base indignities as others, and may tread down your desired reputation the more successfully, by how much their credit is stronger than other men's, to carry on their reports. For, if one that is esteemed godly do accuse you, the most will think they are obliged to believe it, and to say, 'Such or such a godly person spoke it,' doth seem to many enough to warrant the spreading of the falsest reports, to your disgrace.

Or if it be your honour in the eyes of ministers, and learned men, that you inordinately regard, perhaps you may find from some of them, that their learning doth but make them the more skilful in abusing you, and the keener instruments to prick you to the heart, and to cut in pieces that reputation which you overvalued. You shall be reproached more learnedly by them than by others, and slandered a great deal more cunningly, and so with more success. They may perhaps differ from you in some points of judgment; and so may think that they do God service by proclaiming you to be erroneous, or heretical; and their own errors may persuade them that it is their duty to defame you, and accuse you of the guilt, which is indeed their own; like a man that hath a stinking breath, and thinks it not his own, but his companion's, and therefore runs out of his company, and tells him he cannot abide his breath.

It is possible also that their interests and yours may clash, and they may be tempted to tread your reputation in the dirt, as a necessary means for the maintaining of their own; especially if in a faction they find you of a party which they are engaged against, whatever you are yourselves, you must bear the reproaches of your party; and it will be crime enough to be one of that side which they abhor. And it is likely they will not want engines to execute their wrathful zeal. Perhaps they will have some nick-name of reproach for you, and join you with this or that heresy, which they perceive to be odious with those they speak to; and so they will do more by reproachful names and titles,

than they could do by plain argument, or any ingenious course. At least it is likely they will not be wanting in the bitterest censures behind your back: and the hearers will think, be it never so false, that sure there is some truth in it, or else such a learned, well-esteemed man would never have reported it. So that if satan can get but one tongue or pen of a learned man in credit to slander you, it is ten to one but he will get many hundred ears and hearts to drink in the venom, and either to believe it, or entertain uncharitable suspicions of you; and as many tongues to divulge the report (though with pretended compassion and charity) to taint the minds of others with the same infection. It may be those very learned men whom you admire, and whose esteem you are sinfully ambitious of, may be given over to set themselves against you, with the most malicious, shameless calumnies, and lay to your charge the things that never entered into your thoughts, and the things that you never did nor spoke; for a better man than you was so served, Psal. xxxv. 11, 12. "They laid to my charge the things which I knew not, they rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul." Thus did "false witnesses rise up against him, even such for whom he had humbled his soul, and mourned in their affliction, and behaved himself to them as his brethren and friends;" yet, saith he, ver. 15, 16. "In my adversity they rejoiced and gathered themselves together, yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not, they did tear me, and ceased not; with hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth."

Object. 'But is it possible that godly men can be guilty of such things as these?'

Answ. Through the remnant of their corruptions, and the power of temptations, even learned, godly men may be made the powerful instruments of satan, to shatter and destroy your reputation for ever (on earth), and make even countries and kingdoms to believe that of you, from generation to generation, which never entered into your soul; and by their means, if you were persons of so much note, you might be recorded in history to posterity, as guilty of the crimes of which you were most innocent, yea, much more innocent than the reporters themselves. So that it will be the work of Christ, at the day of judgment, to clear the

names of many an innocent one, that hath gone under the repute of a heretic, a proud, malicious man, an adulterer, a deceiver, and a mere unconscionable and ungodly person, even from age to age, and that among the godly themselves by receiving the slander at first from some one that had the advantage to procure a belief of it; it is like it was a seeming godly man that had been David's "familiar friend, in whom he trusted, and which did eat of his bread;" Psal. xli. 6, 7. 9. Yet was he used in this kind by such. And he saith, "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company."

Object. 'But (perhaps you may think) I will walk so carefully and innocently that no man shall have any matter of such reproach.'

Ans. 1. There is none of the imperfect saints on earth that can be free from giving all occasions of reproach. 2. And were you perfectly innocent, it would not free you. Nay, your innocence itself may be the occasion of those reports that proclaim you wicked. For it is not that which really is a fault, but that which they think so, that is the matter of such men's accusations. The apostles of Christ that walked in such eminent holiness and self-denial, and consumed themselves for the good of others, could not escape the tongues of slanderers, but were accounted as the very scum and offscouring of all things, and as a by-word, and even a gazing-stock to angels and men. And the blessed Son of God, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, was yet reputed one of the greatest sinners, and crucified as such. And he that could challenge them, "which of you convinceth me of sin," was commonly defamed of what he was innocent of. If John came fasting, they say 'he hath a devil.' If Christ eat and drink temperately with sinners, that he might take opportunity to feed their souls, they say, "Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" Matt. xi. 18, 19. They that saw him eat and drink with sinners, had so fair a pretence to raise their reproach, that they might the more easy procure belief, though it was perfect in-

nocence in itself which they reproached. The best men on earth have ever had experience, that there is no caution that can defend from a slanderous tongue. As Erasmus, once calumniated, saith, ‘Fatalis est morbus calumniandi omnia. Et clausis oculis carpunt, quod nec vident, nec intelligunt: tanta est morbi vis: atque interim sibi videntur ecclesiæ columnæ, quam nihil aliud quam traducant suam soliditatem, pari malitia conjunctam;’ &c. Leg. Eras. Epist. ad Alphons. Valet. de annuli sui sigillo. How oft was good Melancthon fain to complain, that there is no defence against a quarrelsome, slanderous tongue; and the too much sense of it did almost break his heart.

Object. ‘But at least I can say as the philosopher: If they will reproach me and speak evil of me, I will so live that nobody shall believe them.’

Answ. Wherever there be men to make the report, there will likely be enough to believe it. And if they that know you will not believe it, yet that it is but a few to the most of them abroad that hear of you, and know you not.

You may see then by this time, if reputation with men be the thing you overvalue, what a vain, uncertain thing it is; and how easily God can make your sorrow arise, even from thence where you expected your vain applause.

And you will find by experience, if you do not prevent it, that while you overvalue this or any earthly thing, you are in the road to these afflictions. It is God’s ordinary dealing with his children, and frequently with others, to punish them by their idols, and to make them sickest of that which they have most greedily surfeited of. Could you but crucify the world, and use it for God, it would have no power thus to vex and crucify your mind. It is you that sharpen it, and arm it against yourselves, and give it all the strength it hath, by your overvaluing and overloving it. It is like a spaniel, that will love those best that beat him; but if you cocker it, it will fly in your faces.

Object. ‘But I may fall under all these afflictions whether I love the world or not.’

Answ. 1. But your perverse affections do provoke God to multiply such afflictions. Had you not rather bear a smaller measure, and taste a cup that hath less of the gall? 2. And if you were but crucified to the world, the same afflictions would be as nothing to your mind, which now

seem so grievous to you, and cast you into such vexations and discontents. If it did as much to your flesh, it could not reach the heart; and if all be sound and well within, it is no great matter how it is without. The very same kind of afflictions, whether it be poverty, sickness, slanders, or other wrongs, are as nothing to a man that is dead to the world, which seem intolerable to unmortified men. For the heart and soul of the unmortified are the seat and subject of them; when the mortified Christian hath a garrison within, and bolts the door, and keeps them from his heart. What great trouble will it be to any man to part with that which he doth not care for? especially while he keepeth that which hath his heart. It is no great trouble to a worldling to want the love of God, or communion with him, nor to be without the life of grace, nor to lie under the burden of the greatest sins, and to be the slave of the devil; because he is dead in sin, and dead to God, and the things of the Spirit, and therefore he perceiveth not the excellency of them, but is well content to live without them. And if spiritual death can make men so contented, without the great invaluable treasure, and can make men set light by God and glory; what wonder if they that are dead to the world do set as light by such inconsiderable vanities? And if the dead in sin can bear so easily the greatest misery that man on earth is ordinarily capable of, as the slavery of the devil, the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, the danger of damnation, &c. what wonder then if they that are crucified to the world can bear a little poverty, or sickness, or reproach? which is to the other, but as the prick of a pin, or the scratch of a thorn, to a deadly poison, or a stab at the very heart.

3. But yet this is not all. Your inordinate love of any thing in the world, will not only embitter your lives, but it will be the horror of your souls at death and judgment. And therefore as ever you would leave the world in peace, and as ever you would appear before the Lord your Judge with comfort, and as ever you desire that the creatures should not be your tormentors, take heed that you do not overlove them now, but see that they be crucified to you. You cannot possibly be sensible now, what a pang of horror it will cast you into at the last, when you shall see the world leaving you, and see what it was that you ventured

your souls and their everlasting welfare for. O with what grief and tearing of heart do earthlyminded persons part with the world! When you are dying, that one thing that had your heart, will more torment your hearts to remember it, than all things else will do. Nothing is such a terror to the thoughts of a dying, covetous man, as his money, and lands, and worldly wealth. Nothing so vexeth the ambitious, as to think on that shadow of honour which he did pursue. Nothing doth so torment the filthy fornicator, as the remembrance of that person with whom he committed the beastly sin. All other persons or things in the world will not then be so bitter to you, as those that stole your hearts from God. But at judgment and in hell, the remembrance of them will be a thousandfold more bitter. And who would now prepare such misery for themselves, and glut themselves with that which they can no better digest or bear? What wise man would not rather be without the drunkard's cups, than be fain to spew it up again, and part with it with so much sickness and disgrace? And why should you desire to be drunk with the profits or pleasures of the world, when you know beforehand, with how much shame and trouble of conscience you must cast it up again at last?

4. But yet this is not the worst; but if you will needs live to the world, you must take it for your portion, and look not for any more. And therefore as ever you would not be deprived of your hopes of eternal life, and be put off with the earthly portion of the wicked, see that the world be crucified to you, and you to the world. How poor a portion is it that worldlings do possess! Even like Nebuchadnezzar, that had his portion with the beasts; Dan. iv. 15. How soon will all their portion be spent! and then they will feed with swine, yea, and be denied these very husks. For "they are set in slippery places, and are brought to desolation in a moment;" Psal. lxxiii. 18—20. O how much better a portion might you have had, if you had not refused or neglected it when you had your choice! Methinks in your greatest pleasures and abundance, it should astonish your souls to think, 'This is my portion, I shall have no more.' When you are past this life, and entering into eternity, then where is your portion? Alas, saith conscience, I have had it already! I cannot spend it and have it too!

You know what you have now; but what shall you have hereafter to all eternity? Your portion is almost spent already, and what will you do then? O then, to think that the eternal glory of the saints might have been yours, it was offered as freely to you as them, but you have lost it by preferring the world before it, and that after a thousand convictions of your folly. O what a cutting thought will this be! Luke xvi. 25. To remember that you chose your "good things in this life," will be a sad remembrance when all is gone. "The Lord is the portion of his saints' inheritance" (Psal. xvi. 5.), "even their portion for ever" (Psal. lxxiii. 26.), "their portion in the land of the living," (Psal. cxlii. 5.); and this was it that encouraged them to labour, patience, and hope; Psal. cxix. 52. Lam. iii. 24—26. But for the worldling, "The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him, the increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God;" Job xx. 37—39.

If you can be content with such a portion, make much of the world, and take your fleshly pleasures while you may. But if you hope for the everlasting portion of believers, away with the world, and crucify it without any more ado, and set your hearts on the portion you hope for.

Having said as much as is suitable to the other parts of this discourse, to persuade you to be willing to crucify the world, I shall next give some directions to those that are persuaded, and tell you by what means the work may be done. And I beseech you mark them, and resolve to practise them.

Direct. 1. Observe and practise the direction intimated in the text. 'It is the cross of Christ that must crucify the world to you.' It is thither therefore that you must repair for help. An infidel may fetch such weapons from reason and experience as shall wound the world, and diminish his esteem of it, and make it less delightful to him; but it is only the cross of Christ that can furnish us with those weapons that must pierce it to the very heart. Or if the unbeliever were deprived of all earthly delight, and brought into despair of ever receiving more comfort from the world (as it

is with many of them in some extremity, and with all at death), yet he himself is not crucified to the world. Though his delight in it be gone, yet his love to it is not gone. Though he be out of hope of ever having content in it, yet his desires after it are the same. If he call it vanity and vexation, as the believer doth, it is because it denieth him his desires. Not because he takes it heartily for an enemy, but for an unkind lover, that dealeth hardly with him that hath given it his heart. If he look upon it as dead, and unable to help him, yet doth he behold it as the carcase of a friend, with grief and lamentation. It is his greatest trouble that the world cannot give that which he would have. And therefore he is trying what it will do for them as long as he hath any hope. As the poor infants in Ireland lay sucking at the breasts of the corpse of their mothers, when the Irish papists had slain them, so will these poor worldlings still hang upon the world, even when they find that it cannot help them; and when it will scarce afford them a miserable life; but with much labour and suffering they hardly get a little food and clothing. So that their affections are still alive to the world, even when to their sorrow they look on the world as dead or almost dead to them.

But the cross of Christ will teach you to crucify the world in another manner. As Christ did voluntarily condemn it, and shew that he set so little by it, that he could be content to be the most despicable object upon earth, in the eyes of men, so will he teach you also voluntarily to condemn it; and set up yourselves as the butt, which all the arrows of malice and despite shall be shot at. So that though you have naturally a desire of the preservation of your lives, and from that may say, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me," yet shall you have a far greater desire of pleasing, enjoying, and glorifying God, which shall cause you from a comparative judgment to say, "Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt." Much more shall you be enabled to despise the unnecessary matters of the world, and to mortify your inordinate and distempered affections. The cross of Christ will shew you reason (though such as the worldly wise call foolishness), even such reason as none but a teacher come from God could have revealed, for the leading up your affections from the world; and it will point you to the higher things that do deserve them. This cross is the truest ladder

by which you may ascend from earth to heaven. When in this wilderness, and as without the gate, you are lifted up with Christ on the cross of worldly desertion and reproach, you are then in the highest road to glory, and if you faint not, shall be lifted up with him into the throne. "For if you suffer with him, ye shall also reign with him;" Rom. viii. 17. "And to him that overcometh he will grant to sit with him in his throne, even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father in his throne;" Rev. iii. 21.

And as the cross of Christ is teaching, so also is it strengthening. As the touch of his garment staid the poor woman's issue of blood, so will a touch of the cross by faith even dry up the stream of your inordinate affections, that have run out after the world so long. When a worldling mourneth over the dead world, as having lost his chiefest friend, the cross of Christ will cause you to rejoice over it as a conquered enemy, and to insult over the carcase of its vainglory and delights. For it is one thing to have an angry God by providence to kill the world to us, and another thing to have a gracious Father by his Spirit to crucify us to the world, and the world to us, by the changing of our estimation and affections.

Set therefore a crucified Christ continually before the eye of your souls. See what he suffered for your adhering to the creature; and what it cost you to loose you from it, and bring up your souls again to God. Can you still wait upon the world, and entangle your affections in its painted allurements, when you consider that this is the very sin that killed your Saviour, and which the blood of his heart was shed to cure? Look up to that cross, and see the fruits of worldly love. If you see a man that hath surfeited on unwholesome fruits, lie groaning, and gasping, and trembling in pain, and at last must die for it, you will take heed of such a surfeit yourselves. It was we that took a surfeit of the creature, and the Lord that saw there was no other remedy to save our lives, did by a miracle of mercy and wisdom derive upon himself the pain and trouble, and groaned, and sweat, and bled, and died for our recovery. And will you feed and surfeit again upon the creature?

Look up to that cross of Christ, and see the enmity of the world unto your Head. And will you take it for your friend? See how it used him: and will you expect that

it should deal contrarily with you? Did it hang him up among malefactors: and will it set you on a throne, or dandle you in its lap? Did it pierce his side: and will it heal your wounds? Did it reach him gall and vinegar: and will it reach you milk and honey? If it do, yet trust it not; for the milk is but to prepare you for that sleep, in which it may destroy you without resistance; for you must next expect the hammer and the nail, as Jael used Sisera; Judges iv. 19. 21.

There is not so clear a glass in all the world, in which you may see the world in its just complexion and proportion as the cross of Christ. There you may see what it is worth, and how to be esteemed, by the estimate of one that never was deceived by it, but had a perfect knowledge of its use and value. When you have so long beheld that cross by faith, as that you can be contented to be hanged between heaven and earth, and become the most forlorn and despicable creature in the eyes of men, and to be stripped of all the comforts of life, and life itself, for the sake of Christ, and for the invisible kingdom, which by his cross was purchased for you; then are you thoroughly crucified to the world, and the world to you by the cross of Christ.

Direct. 2. 'Be sure that you receive not a false picture of the world into your minds; or if you have received such an one, see that you blot it out; and think of the creature truly as it is.' The most are deceived and undone by misapprehensions. As if a man should dote on an ugly harlot because of a painted face, or because he seeth a beautiful picture, which is falsely pretended to be hers. The world in itself is vanity and insufficiency: as opposite to God, it is poison and enmity to us. But most men conceive of it as if it were the very seat of their felicity, and so are enamoured of they know not what. If men did not entertain false apprehensions of God, and his holy ways, as being against them, or hurtful to them, or needless and uncomfortable, they could not be so much against them as they are: and so if they did not entertain false apprehensions of the creature and the ways of sin, they could not be so much for them, nor embrace them with so much delight. For they draw in their fancies some odious picture of the blessed God and his ways, and therefore they are averse to them. And so they draw in their fancies some alluring picture of the

world, and make it seem to be what it is not; and therefore they admire it. So that the right way to rectify your affections, is first to rectify your conceptions. I would not have you think worse of the world than it deserves, but only persuade you to judge of it as it is. Do not dream of a palace in the air, and then be enamoured of the matter of your dreams. You think the world is some excellent thing, and will do some great matters for you, and that they are happy men that abound with its riches, and honours, and delights. I beseech you, sirs, return to your wits. I told you before, that those that have tried the world think otherwise of it. They that have seen the utmost that it can do, do shake the head at it, as the blind unbelievers did at Christ, when they saw him hanging on the cross. Why then should you be of so differing a mind? Come nearer, and consider what is it that you admire: is it not the great deceiver of the nations? The bait of the devil, by which he angles for souls? If you should fall in love with a post that were drest in the finest clothes, it were a disgrace to your understandings. And what course should we take to quiet and rectify the mind of such a lover? but even to undress the post, and take off all the bravery, and shew it you naked; and when you see it is but a post, methinks you will not be fond of it any more. Do so then by the world, which you more foolishly admire. It is clothed with riches, and honours, and delights; it is adorned by its followers; there is such running after it and courting it, that you think, sure all this ado is not for nothing. But take off all these befooling gauds, and strip it of these ornaments, and then see how you like it. But perhaps you will say, How should I do that? Why, 1. Consider frequently of how little moment these things are to you. You have matters of everlasting life or death, salvation or damnation, to look after; and what are riches or vain pleasures to these? These are not the things that must denominate you happy or unhappy. You do not stand or fall by them. They are but by-matters, that are promised you as an overplus, so far as shall be fit: but your life or death consisteth not in them. Should a man that must be for ever in heaven or hell, and hath but a little time to determine which it must be, should such a man spend that little time about riches and pleasure? Can you have while at the door of eternity, to hunt after the delights of the flesh,

and study after the prosperity of this world? Why do not dying men do so then? Why do they not bargain, and deceive, and contrive for their lusts and worldly accommodations? No, they have then no list to them, then they have other things to think of. And why not now as well as then? O remember how little matter it is, whether you go poor or rich to the grave. This is not your concernment: and therefore let it not take you up, unless you will wilfully neglect yourselves.

2. And then forget not the brevity of your worldly possessions. Remember whenever they are presented to you in their beauty, that all this will be but for a little while. The veriest beggar in the town, that is not a fool, had rather be as they are, than to have a house full of gold till to-morrow, and then to be stripped of it all again. Remember the pleasures of sin are but for a season: by that time the feast is done, you are as hungry as before: by that time you have done laughing, the matter of your mirth is turned into sorrow, and the jest is cold, and the game is at an end. The hour is almost come already, wherein you shall say of all your pleasure, it is past and gone. And will you trouble yourselves, and ruin your poor souls, for such a fleeting, transitory thing? Will you be at so much cost and labour to build a house, that before you have finished it, will be spurned down by death in a moment?

O that you would but still think of the world as it is, and take off the gloss, and wash away the painting which deceiveth you, and look on it naked, as shortly you shall do; and then it could not have that power to bewitch you, as now it hath: but you would see that your interest lieth not in it, and that you have greater matters that call for your regard: and this is the way to crucify you to the world.

Direct. 3. 'The crucifying of the world doth very much depend upon the crucifying of the flesh.' For I have told you before, that the flesh is the master idol, and the world is but its provision, and the devil's bait. And therefore it is the life of carnality that is the life of the world in you. When men have an appetite that must needs be satisfied, and must have the meat and drink which it desires, and it is as much to them to deny their appetites, as if it were some great and weighty business: these beasts are far from cru-

cifying the world. For they must needs look after provision for these appetites. He that must have the sweetest morsels, and the pleasantest drink, must needs look after provision to maintain it. And he that hath a proud, corrupted mind, that must needs be clothed with the best, and placed with the highest, and keep company with the greatest, or the idlest and merriest companions, this man doth think that he must needs have provision to maintain all this. No man doth admire the world, but he that judgeth by his fleshly interest, and is a slave to his sensuality. Set reason in the throne; let faith illuminate and advance it; subdue your inordinate sensual desires; and then the world will wither of itself. The servants will hide their heads, or comply, if the master be once conquered. Nay, you may then press the world upon a better service. Remember that your sensual appetite was made in order to the preservation of your natures, and to be ruled by reason; if therefore it would become the predominant faculty, and would take up with its own delights as your end, and would rebel against its guide and master, it is time then to use it as a rebel should be used, and with Paul to buffet it and bring it into subjection. And if you can do this, the work is done. It is a childish, if not a brutish thing, and below a man, to be captivated unto sense. It is the content of the higher faculties, that are the pleasures of a man: the pleasing the throat is common to us with the swine. It is the basest spirit, that makes the greatest matter of sensual things; and so must be drowned in unprofitable cares, what he shall eat or drink, or wherewith he shall be clothed. What matter is it to a wise man, whether his meat be sweet or bitter, or whether his drink be strong or small, or whether his clothes be fine or homely; or whether he be honoured, or derided, or past by; save only as these things may have relation to greater things; and as the body must be kept in a serviceable plight; and we must value that capacity most, in which we may best do our Master's work. Keep under the flesh, and you will easily overcome the world: otherwise you strive against the stream. While you have unmortified, raging appetites, and corrupted fancies, and sensual minds, you are biassed to the world; and if the rub of a sermon or sickness may turn you out of your way a while, the bias will prevail, and you will quickly be on it again. If you dam up

the stream of these unmortified affections, they will rage the more : and if you stop them for a while by good company, or some restraint, yet they will shortly break over all, and be more violent than before. All your striving by way of mere restraint, are to little purpose, till the flesh itself be subdued. It is but as if you should strive with a greedy dog for his bone, and with an hungry lion to bereave him of his prey : be sure they will not easily part with it. It is the case of many deluded people, that have some knowledge of Scripture, enough to convince them, and tip their tongues, and strive to restrain them from their sensual ways, but not enough to mortify the flesh and change their souls. O what a combat is there in their lives ! The flesh will have its prey, and pleased it must be. Their conscience tells them, it will cost thee dear. Their flesh like a hungry dog is ready to seize upon that which it desires ; and conscience doth as it were stand over it with a staff, and saith, Meddle with it if thou dare. And sometimes the poor sinner is restrained ; and sometimes again he ventureth upon the prey, and he that had condemned himself for his sin, doth turn to his former vomit, and once more he must have his whore, or his cups ; and then conscience takes him by the throat and terrifieth him, and makes him forbear a little while again. And thus the poor sinner is tost up and down, and satan leads him captive at his will ; and because he findeth a combat within him, he thinks it is the combat between the flesh and the sanctifying Spirit ; when alas, it is no more but the combat between the flesh and an enlightened conscience, assisted with the motions of common grace, which because they resist and trample under foot, their condemnation will be the greater. Would you then have the boiling of your corruptions abated ? Put out the fire that causeth them to boil, or else you trouble yourself in vain. Mortify the flesh once, and get it under, and scorn to be a slave to a sensual appetite, but let it be all one to you to displease it as to please it, and leave such trifles as pleasant meats, and drinks, and dwellings, and fine clothes, to children and fools that have no greater things to mind ; and use the flesh as a servant to the soul, supplying it with necessities, but correcting it if it do but crave superfluities. Do this, and you will easily crucify the world. For the world is only the flesh. For saith John, “ All that is in the world is the lust

of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever;" 1 John ii. 16. Remember that he that saith in my text that he is crucified to the world, doth say also, Gal. v. 24. that "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." This is to kill the world at the root (for it is rooted in the fleshly interest), when otherwise you will but lop off the branches, and they will quickly grow again.

Direct. 4. 'Be sure to keep your minds intent upon the greater matters of everlasting life, and all your affections employed thereupon.' Diversion must be your cure: especially to so powerful and transcendent an object. Be once acquainted with heaven by a life of faith, and it will so powerfully draw you to itself, that you will be ready to forget earth, and take it as a kind of nothing. Get up to God, and fix the eye of your soul on him; and his glory will darken all the world, and rescue you from the misleadings of that false fire that did delude you. Come near him daily, and taste how good he is; and the sweetness of his love will make you marvel at them that think the world so sweet; and marvel at yourselves that you were ever of such a mind. You cannot think that the world will be cast out of your love, but by the appearance of somewhat better than itself. You must go to heaven therefore for a writ of ejectment. You must fetch a beauty, a pleasure from above, that shall abuse it, and silence it, and shame its competition. What is earth and all things in it, to him that hath had a believing, lively thought of heaven! Nothing below this will serve the turn. You may think long enough of the troubles of the world, and long enough confess its vanity before you can crucify it, if you see not where you may have something that is better. The poorest life will seem better than none; and a little in hand will be preferred before uncertain hopes. Till faith have opened heaven to you, as being the evidence of the things invisible, and have shewed you that they are not shadows but substances, which the promise revealeth, and believers do expect, you will be still holding fast that little which you have; and you will say with your hearts as some do with their tongues, 'I know what I have

in this world, but I know not what I shall have in another.' But the knowledge of God will soon make you of another mind. Let in God into the soul, and he will fill it with himself, and leave no room for earth and flesh. Learn what it is to walk with him, and to have a conversation in heaven, and it will cure you of your earthly mindedness; Phil. iii. 18, 19. There is no consistence between earth and heaven. All men are either earthly or heavenly minded. None therefore but the truly heavenly believer hath crucified the world. But because I have said more of this elsewhere, I now forbear.

Direct. 5. 'Understand well the right use and end of creatures, and make it your business accordingly to improve them.' I have told you before that they are for God, and glasses wherein we may see his face, and books in which we may read his name and will. Look after God in them; and never come to a creature, without either an actual, or at least an habitual intending of God as the end thereof. Judge that creature unprofitable wherein you receive not somewhat of God, or do not somewhat for him by it. Take not up with lower thoughts and uses of it. It is one of the commonest and greatest sins, (and, I doubt, with most professors of religion) to use the creature for themselves, and to overlook God in his works and in their mercies, and so to profane them and turn them into sin. Do you understand what is meant by this, that "to the pure all things are pure;" and that "all things are sanctified to us?" All should be holy to holy men. To be holy is to be separated unto God from common, base, inferior uses. If you yourselves are separate to God, all creatures will be sanctified to you; they will be the messengers of God, the revealers of his will, and his remembrancers to your souls: and you will use them accordingly (in that measure as you are sanctified). As we call the temple and utensils of God's worship holy, because they are devoted to God for his special service; so may we call our meat, and drink, and land, and houses, our corn, and grass, and every plant and flower holy (in their places), when the sanctified soul doth read his Maker's name upon them, and admire, and fear, and love him in them, and study how to use them for himself. You will confess that he is a profaner of holy things indeed, that can read over the Scriptures and never observe the name of God

in it, or else regard it as a common word, and use that book but as a common book. Though I do not equal the creatures with the Scriptures, in clearness or fulness of discovering the will of God, yet seeing that it also is one of his books, (and that more legible and glorious than some unobservant wretches do believe), I would entreat all that fear God to lay this more to heart; and to consider for the time to come, whether it be not profaneness, even flat profaneness, to use God's works as common and unclean, and to overlook him, who is the life, and sense, and glory of them? And whether it be not a sin that we are all too guilty of, to take up with selfish, carnal uses, of almost all the works of God, when we should still use them all to higher ends? I fear this great unholiness in our using of the world and all therein, is little bewailed in comparison of what it ought to be. Some Christians are apt enough to hearken to their privileges and titles of honour given them by the Lord; but they consider not all these are for God, and therefore oblige us to answerable duty. Study well those highest titles that are given you in 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. "You are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And what is a spiritual house for, but the habitation of the Lord, and the performance of his service? And surely these holy priests must fetch their sacrifice from all the creatures that are fit for sacrifice. And verse 9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should shew forth the praise of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." And must not a people so holy, and peculiar, adore and hallow the Lord in his works? Though you be not called to minister at his altar, you are called to see him, and sanctify him in his creatures, and in all that you have to do with. God's works are part of his name, and therefore see that you take not his name in vain. You are brought nearer him than the rest of the world; and therefore remember that he will be sanctified of all that draw near him. You have learned in point of receiving to rise with Peter, kill and eat; and not to call that common which God hath cleansed: see that you learn it also in point of duty, and in regard of the use of the creatures which you receive; and take them not as common things, for common, fleshly uses only, as common men do; but re-

member that they are cleansed, and that you profanely devour them, further than God is intended in them.

By this time you may perceive that the crucifying of the world is your truest exaltation and improvement, and that it is so far from being your loss, as that it will prove your greatest gain. I would commend it to you all that desire to live a life of holiness, that you would make it your daily care and study to sanctify your very trades and worldly labours, and all the mercies and matters of your lives. For it is not a bare contempt of the world that will serve. If you should sleep out your days, and never think of the world, or if as melancholy men you should be weary of your lives, because of the vexatious miseries of the world, all this is little to Christian mortification. But if you can see and taste the goodness, and greatness, and wisdom of God, in every thing you have or do, this is the using the world aright.

Quest. ' But how should a man get his soul to that frame to carry on his calling in order to God, and to see him, and intend him in all that we have or do ?'

Ans. To dispatch it in a word, thus, 1. Be sure that God be habitually your end in the main. For if you take him not for your portion, and intend him not habitually in the drift of your lives, you cannot rightly intend him in particulars. 2. Make it your every day's prayer to God, before you go about the labours of your calling, that he would give you hearts to seek him in all, and would watch over you, and save you from ensnaring temptations, and remember you of himself, and give him somewhat of himself by his creatures, and sanctify them all to you. 3. Keep up a godly jealousy of your hearts, lest they should abuse the creature, and seek it and use it more for your carnal selves than for God. If God be jealous, it is time for you to be jealous of yourselves. Especially when the sin is the most common, and radical and destroying sin. 4. Before you go about your callings, bethink yourselves how you may improve them for God. Find out his interest, and study how to promote it; and how to improve all that he gives to that end. And renew your particular intentions of God, in the midst of your work. 5. When you receive or use any creature, consider it both as a mercy and as an obligation unto duty; and as you will not run over the Bible by bare reading, without considering what is the meaning, but will endeavour to take the sense as you

go ; so do in your callings and about all the creatures ; think with yourselves, ‘ Here is now a lesson in my hands, if I can but learn it. Here is somewhat that may shew me, both God himself and my duty, if I could but skilfully open it, and understand it.’ And so bethink yourselves, what it is that God would teach you, or command you by that creature : and especially, to what use he requireth you to put it. And remember, that if you should think of God all the day long, and yet not intend him, and refer your labours and your riches to his service, and give them up to his use, this is not sanctifying God in the creature, but hypocritical abusing of him. For it is not all thinking of God that will serve the turn. 6. As you use to take account of your servants, how they do your work, so I would advise you every night, or as often as you can, to take an account of yourselves, as you are the servants of the God of heaven, and ask your consciences, ‘ What have I done this day for God ; and how have I observed and sanctified him in his work ?’ So much for the fifth Direction.

Direct. 6. ‘ Remember always that the world is the enemy of your salvation, and that if you be damned, it is like to be through its enticement ;’ and therefore labour to be always sensible that you go in continual danger of it. And this will make you use it as an enemy, and walk in a constant fear lest it should overreach you. And see also that you endeavour as clearly as you can, to find out wherein its enmity doth consist ; and then you will perceive that it is especially in seeming more lovely than it is, as it is the fuel of concupiscence, and the provision of the flesh. And when you understand this, you will perceive, that your danger lieth in overloving it, and that it killeth by its embraces : and this will direct you which way to bend the course of your opposition, and what you must do to be saved from its snares. To call the world an enemy is easy and common ; but so far as your very hearts apprehend it as an enemy, so far you are out of danger of it ; an easy enemy that is conquered by understanding that it is an enemy ; and the way of its conquest is, by enticing men to take it for a friend.

And also remember, how great a part of your Christian life consisteth in keeping up the combat with this enemy,

and how certainly and miserably you will perish if you be overcome.

Direct. 7. 'To be much in the house of mourning, and see the end of all the living, will help us towards the crucifying of the world.' Go among the sick, and hear what they say of the world. Stand by the dying, and see what it will do for them; and think now, whether God or the world be better. Look on the corpses of your deceased friends, and think now whether the soul be ever the better for all the riches and pleasures of the world. Take notice of the graves and bones of the dead, and think what a worthless thing is the world, and all the glory and delights that it affords, which will so turn us off, and leave our bodies in such a plight as that. Take notice of the frailties and diseases of your own flesh, that tell you how shortly it must lie down in the dust: and then compare this world and that to come, where your abode will be everlasting. It is a shame for a wise man to live as a stranger to so great a change, and to look so much after a world that he is leaving, and so little after the world that he shall abide in.

Direct. 8. 'It will much avail to the crucifying of the world to you, that you study the improvement of all your afflictions.' Do not repine at them, and think them a greater evil than they are; but believe that they are a special advantage to your soul, for the mortifying of your inordinate affections to the world; and if you have but the wisdom and hearts to make use of them, they may do you more good than all the prosperity of your lives hath done. If you fall into poverty, or fall under slanders or reproach from men; if your friends prove false to you; if those that you have done good to prove unthankful; if the wickedness and frowardness of men do make you even weary of the world; remember now what an advantage you have for mortification. When you have experience itself to disgrace the creature to you, and your very flesh doth seem to be convinced; now see that you observe the teachings of this providence, and come off from the world, when you see it is so little worth; and set as light by it as it doth by you. Bethink you now that God doth this to lead you to himself; and thankfully accept his call, and close with him as your portion, and be content with him alone, and let them take the world that can get no better. You see that adversity will make even a worldling

speaking hardly of the world, as men will do of their friends when they fall out with them. How much more should it help the gracious soul to a fuller sense of its vanity and nothingness, and of the necessity and excellency of more certain things. It is a great sin and folly in us, that we strive more to have afflictions removed than sanctified, and so we lose the gain that we might have got. Though affliction alone will do little good, yet grace doth make such use of affliction, that thousands in heaven will have cause to bless God for them, that before they were afflicted went astray, and were deceived by the flatteries of the world as well as others. Abundance that have been convinced of the vanity of the world, have lingered long before they would forsake it, until affliction hath roused their sleepy souls, and by a louder voice hath called them away.

Direct. 9. 'Be very suspicious of a prosperous state, and be more afraid of the world when it smiles, than when it frowns.' Some are much perplexed for fear lest they should not stand in adversity, that too little fear being ensnared by prosperity. They are afraid what they shall do in a time of trial, and do not consider that prosperity is the great trial. Adversity doth but shew that love of the world which was in men's hearts in time of prosperity. When men forsake Christ for fear of suffering, and because they will not forsake the world, they do but shew the effects of that disease, which they had caught long before. When the world pleased them, they fell so deep in love with it, that now they will venture their souls to keep it. It is prosperity that breeds the disease, though adversity shew it. Love not the world, and you will easily part with it, and so will easily suffer for Christ; and prosperity is liker to entice your love to it than adversity. This is a great reason why worldly prosperity and true holiness do so seldom go together; and so few of the great ones of the world are saved. O how hard is it to have the world at will, and not to be ensnared by it, and overlove it? How hard is it heartily and practically to condemn a prosperous condition! How hard to have serious, lively thoughts of the great things of eternity, and serious preparations for death and judgment, when we have health, and wealth, and all the accommodations which our flesh doth desire! Satan knows this well enough; and therefore he is willing that his ser-

vants shall have prosperity. He knows that it is not the way to get him servants, to beat them and use them hardly, but to please them by flatteries, and fulfil their lusts, that they may be enticed to imagine his service to be the best. It is the custom of harlots to set out themselves to the best, and to adorn themselves for the tempting of their lovers; and not to go in a homely dress, which no one will be taken with. No wonder then if Satan, the pander of the world, do adorn it with the best clothes, and present it to you in the most enticing garb he can. "If the lips of this harlot did not drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth were not smother than oil," she could not lead such multitudes to "her end, which is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword; her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of hell, lest men should ponder the path of life;" Prov. v. 3—6. And it is no wonder that God to save his people from this delusion, doth dress the world to them in a coarser attire; and when he seeth them in danger to be enamoured of it, as well as others, if he present it to them in the rags of poverty, and in the scabs of its corruption, confusion, and deformity, that they may see the difference between it and their home.

It is strange to see how highly prosperity is regarded by the most! how earnestly they desire it, pray for it, or contrive it! and how much they are troubled when they fall into adversity; when yet they know, or say they know that the love of the world is the bane of the soul, and that it killeth them by deceiving them. Can you keep your affections as loose from the world, when you have houses and lands, and all things at your will, as you could if it were otherwise? Remember I beseech you that the poison of the world is covered by its sweetness, and that it killeth none but those that love it. Be suspicious therefore that there is danger where you find delight. If your estate be such as is pleasing to your flesh, believe it is not likely to be safe to your souls. If therefore your health, your wealth, your honours, be such as your flesh would have them; if your houses, your accommodations, your things be suited to your carnal desires, believe it your souls are in no small hazard; and therefore look about you as you love your salvation, and fear the snare. The great enemy of your souls hath not baited his hook with so curious and costly a bait for nothing. The cautious fish that is afraid to swallow,

yea, or to taste, or to come near, until he knows what is under it, doth save his life, when that which boldly ventures, and fearlessly devoureth the bait, is destroyed. It is not for nothing that Solomon chargeth the man "that is given to his appetite, to put a knife to his throat at a feast, and not to be desirous of the dainties which are deceitful;" Prov. xxiii. 1—3. "A prudent man foreseeeth the evil," even when it is covered with the most pleasant bait, and "so he hideth himself," and escapeth, when the "simple passeth on and is punished;" Prov. xxii. 3. It is part of the description of the sensual apostates, in Jude 12. that in "their feasts they feed themselves without fear." And it is as dangerous a thing to clothe yourselves without fear, to seek after wealth and honours, without fear, to possess your houses and lands without fear, to see any thing that is carnally pleasing to you, or hear your own praises without fear; when other men must needs have things to their will, do you study your duty, and let the will of God be your will; and if he give you a plentiful estate without seeking it, or give you reputation and the praise of men without your affecting it, receive them not without fear; think with yourselves, 'What a snare is here now for my soul!' Though it be good in itself, and as it comes from God, yet what an advantage hath the deceiver here against me! How easily may such a carnal heart as mine be enticed to the inordinate love of these, and to be more remiss about higher and greater things, and to be forgetful or insensible about the matters of my endless state! How many men of worldly wisdom, yea, how many that seemed religious, have been thus deceived and perished before me! Yea, this is the common road to hell! And is it not time for me then to look about me?' The old Christians were so jealous of the world, and afraid of being mortally poisoned by its delights, that they sold what they had, and gave to the poor, and voluntarily thrust themselves into poverty, as thinking it better to go poor to heaven, than to say in hell that once they had riches. I commend not any extreme to you, for indeed I have ever thought that it is greater self-denial to devote and use our riches for God, than at once to cast them away or shut our hands of them; and that he is a better steward that improveth his master's stock, than he that rids his hands of it, out of an injurious fear of

his master's austerity. But yet I must say that the other extreme is more common and more dangerous. And they that out of excess of fear, betook themselves to poverty and to wildernesses, were in a far better case than many that seem now to be zealous professors, and yet are looking after the pleasures, and riches, and glory of the world! I have many a time wondered at some eminent professors, that are as constant and seraphical in the outside of duty, even to admiration, as almost any I know, and yet as closely and busily grasping at the world, and labouring to be rich, as if they were the most wretched worldlings on earth. I have oft wondered how they can quiet their consciences, and how they make shift so constantly to delude such knowing souls. The country sees them drowned in earth, and the generality of their godly friends lament them, as mere hypocritical earth-worms; and yet because they can carry it on smoothly and not be noted for any palpable oppression or deceit, they wipe their lips, they bless themselves, and with gracious words would cloak their covetousness, as if men did but uncharitably censure them, because they cannot prove them to be such deceivers; when yet the very bent and course of their lives proclaimeth them worldlings to almost all men but themselves, who by the just, but heavy judgment of God, are given over to that blindness, as not to see that damnable sin in themselves, that the enemies of religion see with scorn, and their most impartial friends do see with lamentation; but seeing it, are not able to remedy; for worldliness is the most common badge of a hypocrite; and where there is a false heart at the bottom, and but a hypocritical faith, and a hypocritical love to God and the life to come, there will be no effectual resistance of the world; but all exhortations upon so great disadvantage with such souls, that usually they are lost, and leave them as they find them. If any covetous, scraping earth-worm, whether he be gentleman, tradesman, or husbandman, do feel his conscience at the reading of this begin to stir, I beseech him (if there be any hope of such hypocrites) to hearken to it in time, and regard a little more the warnings of his friends, and not to be so stiffly confident of his innocency; nor yet to think himself free from heinous, gross, and scandalous sin, as long as he is a covetous worldling! If covetousness be idolatry, and the sin of those with whom we

may not so much as eat, and if the covetous shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, and be such as the Holy Ghost doth join with thieves and the vilest sinners; who then but an infidel can think it is not a scandalous sin, and such as will be the damnation of all that be not thoroughly cured of it? See Ephes. v. 5—7. 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. Psal. x. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 14. Luke xvi. 14. Mark vii. 22. Jer. viii. 10. vi. 13. David prayeth God to “incline his heart to his testimonies, and not to covetousness;” Psal. cxix. 36. And now men think they may be inclined to both, and that they have found out the terms of reconciling heaven with earth and hell. I marvel these men will not see their own faces, when the prophets and Christ himself do hold them so clear a glass! “They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness;” Ezek. xxxiii. 31. “He that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful;” Matt. xiii. 22. I know the men that I am now speaking of have many excellent gifts, and in other respects do seem the most forward for godliness in the country; but the more is the pity, that men of such parts should be rottenhearted hypocrites, and damned for worldliness, after so much pains in duties; for a heathen may as soon be saved as a worldling. When they have prayed, and preached, and cried down profaneness, let them hear what the Lord saith to them (Luke xviii. 22—24.), and there see again their faces in that glass. “Yet lackest thou one thing,” even such a one as none can be saved without, even a love to God and heaven above earth. “Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me; and when he heard this he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”

Set not then so high a value on a full estate. “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have;” and trust yourselves on the security of his promise, who hath said, “I will never leave

thee nor forsake thee ;” Heb. xiii. 5. It is not for nothing that Christ himself hath given you so many and so terrible warnings to take heed of this sin. As Luke xii. 15. “ Take heed and beware of covetousness ; for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.” As if he should say, while you think you are securing your wellbeing, you do not secure your being itself. When you have done all to provide for the delights of your life, you are never the surer of life itself. Read the following passages in the text, and let them warn you or condemn you. If such admonitions as these will not take, from the mouth of him whom you call your Lord, and from whom you profess to expect your judgment, what have we then further to say to you, or how should our warnings expect entertainment with you ? Yet I shall do that which is my duty, and leave the success to God. I do therefore again in the name of God, advise and warn you to take heed of having too pleasant thoughts on a prosperous state. Long not after fulness and plenty in the world. Be not too eager for accommodations to your flesh. A coffin of two yards long will shortly hold it, and be room enough for it. And will nothing but well-built houses, adorned rooms, the neatest clothings and plentiful possessions serve you now ? How sad a mark is this of a soul that never had a saving taste of the everlasting riches ! Away foolish children, and stand not building houses with sticks and sand ! Home with you to God, and remember where you must dwell for ever. When you have feathered your nests, and made them as you would have them, you must leave them before you are well settled and warm in them. And if it comfort you to think that you leave them to your children, remember that you leave them the fruit of your sins, and bequeath to them the snares that undid your souls that so they may become the heirs of your wickedness, and be deceived and destroyed by the world, as you have been. This is your great care for them ; and this is your kindness to them. I have told you once already from God, that “ this your way is your folly, though your posterity be like to approve your sayings,” because you do so much to make them of your mind ; Psal. xlix. 13. For though “ your inward thoughts be that your house shall continue,” and you hope to leave a name behind you, yet “ man being in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts

that perish. When he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him; though while he lived he blessed his soul, and men praise them that (thus) do well to themselves; yet shall they go to the generation of their fathers, and shall never see light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;" ver. 11, 12, 17—20. Though "the ungodly prosper in the world and increase in riches," yet he that "goeth (believingly) into the sanctuary, may see their end. Surely they are set in slippery places, and cast down unto destruction. How are they brought to desolation as in a moment, and consumed with terrors?" Psal. lxxiii. 12, 17—19. "And in that very day do all his thoughts perish;" Psal. cxlvi. 4. "Then shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices; for the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them;" Prov. i. 31, 32.

See then that you be not eager for prosperity; and if God cast it on you, use it with fear. And if ever you feel the creature begin to grow too sweet and delightful to you, then spit it out as the poison of the soul, and presently take a mortifying antidote before you are past remedy. As you feel the working of poison by its burning or griping, or other effects agreeable to its nature, by which it seeketh the extinguishing of life; so you may feel when the world is poison to your souls, by its creeping into your affections, and insinuating into your hearts with present delight, or future hopes; by seeming more lovely and more necessary than it is. As soon as ever you feel it thus creep into your hearts, it is time to rise up against it with holy fear, and to cast it out, if you love your souls.

And that which I would advise you at present, when the world hath got too deep into your hearts before you are aware, is this: Do something extraordinary in such a necessity, for its crucifixion and your recovery. Though a careful diet may serve to preserve health while you have it; yet if you have lost it, and sickness be upon you, you must have recourse to physic for your cure. If honour, or preferment, or house, or land, or friends, or gain, or recreations begin to seem too sweet and dear to you, and your hearts begin to hug them with delight, or make out after them with keen desires, you must now have recourse to extraordinary

helps ; and in particular, try these following: 1. Withdraw yourselves to some more frequent and serious meditation of the brevity and vanity of the world, than you have been used to : steep your thoughts longer in mortifying considerations, until the bent of your hearts begin to change. 2. Be often with God in secret and public prayer, and give up a larger portion of your time to holy things than ordinarily you have done ; that acquaintance with heaven may wean your mind from earth ; and the love of God may drown your worldly love. When you have taken any extraordinary cold, you will get nearer the fire than ordinary, and be longer at it, and drive it out by heating things. And when the world hath insinuated into your affections, and chilled and cooled them to God and heaven, it is time to draw nearer God than before, and to be longer with him ; and to strive harder in every duty than you did, until spiritual life do work more vigorously, and expel that earthly distemper which had possessed you. 3. And at such a season let prayer be furthered by fasting and extraordinary humiliation ; which may help down the flesh which causeth you so much to overvalue the world. Even an Ahab found some ease by a common humiliation, when he had taken a mortal surfeit of Naboth's vineyard and his blood. Much more may a true Christian find much help by special humiliation, when he hath surfeited on any creature whatsoever. 4. And I think it would be a very good course at such a time as that, to be at some more cost for God than you were before. When you feel your love to the world increase, give somewhat extraordinary then to the poor, or to pious uses, according to your ability. Yea, what if it were so far as might a little pinch yourselves ! This were a real opposition to the world, and you might turn a very temptation to a gain, and get much good by occasion of a sin. It might do much to dishearten and repel the tempter, when he seeth that you overshoot him in his own bow, and make such use as this of his temptations, as to do the more good, and use your wealth the more for God, and deny yourselves more than you did before. If you would but faithfully practise these few directions, you would find it the surest way of recovery when you begin to be infected with this earthly disease.

Direct. 10. The last direction that I shall give you for

the crucifying of the world, is this, Be sure to keep off the means of its livelihood, and keep it still under the mortifying means. Lay siege to it, and stop up all the passages, by which the world's provision would come in; and keep it still under the strokes of enmity, and the influence of that which is contrary to it. Some particulars I will but briefly mention.

1. Keep a constant guard upon your senses; for this way the world creeps into your hearts. It is by gazing on alluring objects, or hearing or tasting, or the like, that the flames of concupiscence are kindled in the heart. By gazing upon beauty or comeliness of person, the heart of the wanton is infected with lust, and so incited to the damnable practices of uncleanness. The sight of the cup doth set an edge on the desires of the drunkard; and the sight of enticing meats doth awaken and enrage the appetite of the gluttons: and by the presence of the bait their disease is set to work, as worms in the body are by some kind of food. Clemens Alexandr. saith of these men, that their disease is called *λαιμαργία*, that is, 'a madness about the throat.' And *γαστριμαργία*, that is, a 'madness in the belly.' And saith of them that are given to fulness or fineness of diet, for the pleasing of their bellies, that they are ruled by a belly-devil, which, saith he, is the worst and most pernicious of all devils. Cl. Alex. Pædag. l. 2. c. (The whole book is worth the reading by such.) Lay siege then to this belly-devil, and starve him out. It is by the sight of gaudy fashions, and curious apparel, that the minds of vain, effeminate persons are provoked to desire the like. And the sight of pomp and honours doth kindle the fire of ambition; and the sight of buildings, money, and lands, doth help to provoke the desire of the covetous. See therefore that you always keep a watch upon your eyes. Let them not run up and down like a masterless dog, nor roll as the eyes of the lascivious, that are hunting after their prey of lust. If you have cause to pray as David, Psal. cxix. 37., "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity," you must practise according to your prayers, and endeavour yourselves to turn them away. Have not the best of us as much reason as Job to "make a covenant with our eyes?" Job xxxi. 1. What wonder if the garrison surrender not where the besieged have free passage and continual supplies? And what wonder if

the house be robbed, where the doors stand always open, and all is common to every passenger? Be sure then to keep a constant guard upon your eyes, your appetite, and every sense, or else the world will not be crucified. Let not your eyes move but by the conduct of your reason. At least, let it not fix upon any object, until reason give it leave. Taste not a bit of meat or a cup of drink, until you have advised with right informed reason, and be able to justify what you do. Take an account of all that entereth at the door of any of your senses. For he that must give an account to the living God, had need to keep account himself.

2. Keep also a constant guard upon your thoughts as well as upon your senses. As the thoughts will tell you what is in your hearts, so they will let in whatsoever bribeth them to consent. The fancies of men are the garden of the devil, where he soweth and watereth the plants of impiety. Yea, they are a principal room in which he doth inhabit. It is certain that the devil hath more ready access to the fancy than to the heart; and that it is his shop in which he forgeth most vices, and doth a very great part of his work. An unclean spirit possesseth the fancies of the unclean, so that their thoughts are running upon lustful objects. And they are guilty of the filthiest cogitations within, when they seem to be of the most chaste behaviour without; and do frequently commit fornication in the heart, when fear or shame doth restrain the outward practice, and cover their iniquity. The malicious person is possessed by a spirit of maliciousness that dwelleth in his fancy, and sets him on contrivances of cruelty and revenge, and filleth his mind with thoughts of hatred and disdain. The same spirit reigneth in the fancies of the proud, and setteth them upon contrivances for the advancing of their names, and causeth them to thirst after the reputation of the world, and filleth them with the troubled, malicious thoughts of Haman, when they miss of their expectations. The earthly spirit possesseth the fancies of the covetous, and setteth them on contrivances for increase of their estates. Do you not feel by sad experience, how many of satan's assaults are made upon your cogitations, and how much of his interest lieth there, and how much of his work is there done? As ever you would be crucified to the world then, set a watch upon your

thoughts, and keep a daily and hourly account of them, and see that they be always under the government of faith and reason. Your thoughts should be kept chaste as the entrance into your hearts, and not be as common harlots entertaining every comer. If you feel your thoughts stepping out upon lust or malice, look after them betime, and call them in, and check them sharply, and lay a charge on them hereafter to be more pure. If you find that they are running with Gehazi after the prize, and are making out after the provisions for the flesh, recall them and correct them, and bewail this evil before the Lord, and let your watch be stricter for the time to come. Believe it, your hearts will be such as are your thoughts. The flies that lie upon sores, or dung, or carrion, and the worms that are bred in them, will be of the nature of that corruption themselves. If you would have your hearts clean, and humble, and heavenly, let your thoughts be clean, and humble, and heavenly. If you will let your thoughts run on the objects of lust, you will be lustful: and if you will think of the enticements of pride, you will be proud: and if you will let out your thoughts on the profits of the world, no wonder if it steal away your hearts. Saith the Lord to the covetous and unmerciful, Deut. xv. 7—9., “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand, and thy eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him naught, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved, when thou givest to him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.” Besides the main drift of the text, mark how we are commanded to beware that a thought of unmercifulness enter not into our hearts. And when Christ doth so vehemently dissuade his followers from this damn-

ing sin, he doth it by setting a law upon their thoughts : “ Why take ye thought ; ” &c. Matt. vi. 25. 27, 28, 31. 34. “ Take no thought,” Luke xii. 22. 26. “ If the unrighteous man forsake not his thoughts,” he will not forsake the “ evil of his way ; ” Isa. lv. 7. As you love your souls then, look to your thoughts, and keep them under the government of the Lord. Would you be free from a vain and sensual mind ? “ How long then shall your vain thoughts lodge within you ? ” Jer. iv. 4.

3. And see also that you make not worldlyminded men your companions. While they savour nothing but earth and flesh, they will have no savoury discourse of any thing else ; and their discourse is like to be infectious to your minds. As a stews is not the best place to preserve you from uncleanness ; nor an alehouse the best place to preserve you from drunkenness ; so the company of worldlings is not the best place to preserve you from worldliness ; where you shall see or hear little but earthly things, and heavenly matters can find no room. It is not the safest place to fight against the devil in the midst of his own army, but in the army of Christ.

On the other side, be sure that you keep under mortifying means. Attend to the lively preaching of the word, which will disgrace the world to you, and be still drawing your hearts another way. Be much with God in secret prayer, and be much above in heavenly meditation ; and dwell upon those thoughts which lay the world naked to you, and shew it you in its own complexion. If death and judgment be seriously in your minds, it will waken you from these fleshly dreams, and prick the bladder of your airy minds, and let out that wind which puffed you up, and kept out the things of God and glory. Converse also as much as you can with the most heavenly people, whose discourse, and prayers, and daily examples will help to draw up your minds to God, and to affect them with things that more nearly concern you, than all the profits, or pleasures of the world.

I have now told you how you should crucify the world, and be crucified to it ; but which of you will be so happy as to practise these Directions I cannot tell. I have brought you the armour and weapons by which this mortal enemy must be conquered : but it is not in my power to give you

courageous hearts to use them. I can certainly tell you what a safe and comfortable life you might live, if you had but this enemy under your feet ; and what an easy and happy death you might die, if you were first dead to the world : but to make you so happy is not in my power. I can foresee the certain damnation of all unconverted sensualists and worldlings, and how sad a farewell they must shortly take of all their felicity ; but to prevent it is not in my power. For I cannot make you willing to prevent it. It is a greater work than bare information that is here to be done. If it were but to give the world a few contemptuous words, and to call it vanity and a worthless thing, I should make no doubt of prevailing with the most ; but to kill it in your hearts is a harder work ; and with some kind of men it prospers most when it is most hardly spoken of. It is easy to tell a man why and how he should lay down his life for Christ if he be called to it ; but there is more to be done before it will be practised. Until a heavenly light possess your minds, and shew you the better things to come, and assure you of more to be had in Christ, than the world can afford you, I cannot look you should lose your hold, nor that a hundred sermons should make you willing to seek the death of that which hath your heart. Sense is tenacious and unreasonable ; when you have knocked it off a hundred times, yet still it will be sense, and will be eager after its delights again. Some will be still thinking that mortification and heavenymindedness is so rare a thing, that God will be more merciful than to condemn all that are without them ; and some will be inconsiderate and senseless, when the clearest reason is set before them ; and will venture their salvation rather than become dead to all their worldly lusts and hopes. So that with sorrow I must say, that now I have said all, and delivered my message, I fear the most will still be the same, and reject the counsel of God to their perdition. For this is a grace that accompanieth salvation, and therefore will be the portion only of the heirs of salvation. Though our heart's desire, and prayer, and endeavour must be that the professed Israelites may be saved ; yet we must take up our comfort shorter, that the elect shall obtain it, though the rest are hardened. For it is God's will, and not ours that must be done. If Christ be satisfied in the salvation of his little flock, as seeing in them the travail of his

soul; even so must we; and though as Samuel did over Saul, so we may mourn over the rest that God hath forsaken, yet that sorrow must know its reason and its measure. For my part, I must needs say to you, that though it may seem a high extraordinary thing to some of you, for a man to be crucified to the world, I have no more hope of the salvation of many of you, except it shall be thus with you, than I have of the salvation of Cain or Judas. And as great and wonderful a work as this is, if ever God mean to save your souls, it will be done on you. I shall therefore according to my duty, beseech you to review and practise the directions which are given you, and to use the world as the heirs of heaven, that have laid up their hope and treasure there. But if you will not hear and take warning, it is because the Lord will destroy you, and because you are not the sheep of Christ; 2 Chron. xxv. 16. 1 Sam. ii. 25. John x. 26, 27.

Use last.

I have been all this while persuading and directing you to be crucified to the world, and the world to you. I doubt not but God hath done this work already upon the souls of many of you, even upon all that truly believe in a crucified Christ. To such therefore I shall next address my speech; and in general, this is my earnest request to you, That you would use the world as a crucified thing, and as men that are crucified to it should do. I will not lengthen this discourse in using many motives to you. One would think that which way ever you look, you should have forcible motives before your eyes. If you look downward on earth, you may see enough to wean you from it; and if seeing will not serve, your most wise and gracious Father will make you feel, and put the case beyond dispute. If you look upwards, you may perceive a better and more enduring substance, and an inheritance so much the more glorious and enduring, as should suffice to take your minds from earth. If you look within you, what footsteps of the Spirit may you there trace, what graces in act and habit may you find, which are all at mortal enmity with the world! You may read there a law engraven upon your hearts which condemneth the world to subjection and contempt; and many an obligation you may there find, wherein you are deeply bound against it. For I hope you have not can-

celled them all, and forgot all the promises which you made to God. All your professions, and all your blessed privileges and hopes do engage you to another world, and to the hearty renouncing and forsaking of this. You say you are crucified and risen with Christ. If you be, then seek the things that are above; set your affections on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are on earth, fornication, uncleanness, idordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; Col. iii. 1—7. It doth not beseem the members of a crucified Christ to be earthlyminded; nor the members of a glorified Christ to set their minds on things so low. It ill beseems the heirs of an incorruptible crown of glory to make too great a matter of these trifles. It is the enemies of the cross of Christ, and not those that are crucified with him, whose God "is their belly, and who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things;" but the saint's conversation must be in heaven, from whence it is that he expecteth his Saviour to change his vile, earthly body, and make it like to his glorious body; Phil. iii. 17—21. If indeed you have laid up your treasure in heaven, where rust and moth corrupt not, and where thieves do not break through and steal, let it then appear by the effects. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be; and where your heart is, that way the labours of your lives will tend. I shall reduce my exhortation to some particulars.

1. If you are crucified to the world, be sure that you seek it not, nor any thing in it, for its own sake; but only as a means to higher things. The sincerity of your hearts doth lie much in this, and the life of your souls depends much upon it. Labour in your lawful callings and spare not, so you exclude not your spiritual work: it is not your labour that we find fault with: but if the creature be the end of any labour, you may better sit still, and spare your pains, or rather speedily change your intentions. If you overtake the hastiest traveller in his journey, and ask him, why he takes all that pains; he will not say it is for love of the way that he travelleth in, but for love of the place to

which he is going, or the persons or things which he there expects: so must it be with you, if you are the heirs of heaven. I blame you not to be glad of a fair way, and to love it rather than a foul one: but it is not for the love of the way that you must travel. He that runs in a race, doth not bestow all that pains for the love of the path which he runs in, but for love of the prize which he expecteth at the end. And he that plougheth and soweth, doth it more for the love of the crop which he hopeth for, than for the love of his labour. He that saileth through the dangerous seas, performeth not his voyage for love of the sea, or of his ship, but for love of the merchandize and gain which he seeketh. The carrier that goeth weekly to London with your wares, doth not take all that pains for love of the carriage, or of the way, but of the gain which he deserveth. So must it be with you, in all your worldly business. When you seek for credit, or pleasure, or maintenance in the world, it must not be finally for the love of these, but for the end which they are given for, and which your hearts and lives and all must be devoted to. Your hearts will as soon deceive you in this as in any thing, if you do not watch them with jealousy and diligence. How quickly will the heart begin to love the creature for itself, that seemed once to love it but for God? Look in what measure you love your wealth, your houses, your recreations, your friends, for themselves, and because they accommodate the flesh; so far you wrong God, and abuse them to idolatry.

And if your love do begin in greater purity, if you be not watchful it will quickly degenerate to a carnal love. Many a scholar that at first desired learning to fit him for the service of God, and his church, doth by suffering carnality to insinuate and prevail, lose much of the purity of his first affections, and in time grow more cold and regardless of his first ends, and loveth common learning merely for itself, and for the delight of knowing, or (which is worse) to get him a name among men.

It is common with them that need recreation for their health, when they set upon it, as they think, but to fit them for their duty, to fall in love with it afterwards, to the perverting of their hearts, the wounding of their consciences, the wasting of their time, and the neglect of that work of God for which it should be used.

We should take our meat, and drink, and clothes, but to strengthen and fit us for the service of our Master: but how quickly do we turn them to the gratifying of our flesh, and to the service of another master?

It is too frequent for young persons of different sexes to love each other at first as Christians only, with a chaste and necessary love; but when they have been tempted awhile to an imprudent familiarity, their love doth degenerate, and that which was spiritual becometh carnal, and the serpent deceiveth them to the corrupting of their minds, and it is well if it proceed not to actual wickedness, and the undoing of each other.

Many a poor man thinks with himself, If I were but out of debt, or could but live so as to serve the Lord without distractions, and had such and such necessities supplied, I would not desire any more, or care any further for the world. But if their desires be granted them, they find themselves entangled, and their hearts deceived, and they thirst more after fulness, than before they did after necessities. And many a one thinks, I care not for riches or honours, but only to do good with, and if I had them I would so use them. But when they have their desires, the case is altered: the flesh then hath need of it, and can spare for God as little as other men, because it loves it better than before, and pretendeth to have more use for it than formerly it had.

Watch therefore over your deceitful hearts, and be sure to keep up the love of God, and actually intend him in all that you have or do; and be not withdrawn to carnal affections.

2. If you are crucified to the world, be not too eager for it. As God hath promised it you but as an appendix to your felicity, and as an overplus to the great blessings of the covenant, so must you desire it but as such. And as God hath promised it you but with certain limitations, so far as he shall see it good for you, and agreeable to his greater end; so you must desire it with such limitations. I observe many to have so much reason as to put up their prayers for outward blessings with these limitations, and will not for shame express themselves in absolute, peremptory language; when yet there is apparent cause to fear, that they limit not their desires as they do their words, nor do they submit so

freely to the disposal of God in their hearts, as they seem to do in their expressions : and so make their words modest whilst their desires are inordinate : their language to be chaste, while their hearts are committing adultery with the world ; their expressions are pious, while their affections are idolatrous ; and so their prayers are made monstrous, while the soul of them is so disagreeable to the body. Be ashamed and afraid to desire that which you are ashamed and afraid to ask. You dare not say to God in your prayers ‘ Lord, I must needs have a fuller estate ! I would fain be rich and be somebody in the world : I cannot live contentedly in poverty : food and raiment will not serve turn, unless I fare deliciously, and be clothed neatly, and be set by in the world, and unless I may leave prosperity to my children when I am dead and gone.’ If you dare not say thus, do not dare to desire or think thus. Mr. Robert Bolton, that holy, learned divine, doth use among the heinous, damning sins, to reckon this, ‘ a desire to be rich.’ And if we hearken to the Scripture, we shall find it is not without good cause : Prov. xxiii. 4. the command is, “ Labour not to be rich.” And Prov. xxviii. 20. “ He that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.” The Syriac renders the word “ malignant,” and the Arabic, “ the wicked,” which we here translate “ he that hasteth to be rich.” And they must needs be the same men when the apostle saith, “ The love of money is the root of all evil ;” 1 Tim. vi. 10. Therefore saith Paul, “ They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition ;” 1 Tim. vi. 9. By this word, “ they that will,” or “ are willing to be rich,” is meant, they whose wills are set upon it, and are in love with it, and fain would be rich. Is it fitter for God or you to determine how many talents you shall be entrusted with ? Do you long to have more duty, and danger, and a double account ? It is true, you may desire the success of your labours ; but not for the love of riches, nor with an unmannerly, peremptory desire. It is true also, that you must be thankful for prosperity if God give it you : but as it must be with an holy jealousy, so it is as true that you must be thankful also for adversity, when God sends it ; though not for itself, yet for the good that it may conduce to : and therefore saith

James i. 9, 10. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low." And Job could say, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord;" Job i. 21.

3. If you are crucified to the world, then let it not have power to crucify you, by putting you upon inordinate cares or sorrows. Will you vex your brains with contriving for the world, and weary your mind with tearing cares, and walk in sorrow because you have not your desires? and yet say that you are crucified to the world? Are the dead so solicitous? or is a carcase to be so much valued? Your passions and endeavours will proclaim your excessive estimation of the world, when you have never so long in words professed your contempt of it. Alas! how many that seem to know better, do almost distract their minds with cares, and entangle themselves in a life of so much misery, as a wise man would not like for all the world! If they want any thing, what trouble are their minds in till their wants are supplied! If they be afflicted with losses, or wrongs, or contempt, they are troubled as if they had lost some great or necessary thing. A crucified world could not make such a stir in your minds; but doubtless it is so far alive as it thus affecteth you. The Lord Jesus hath himself made so full and moving a sermon to his disciples, against the cares of the world, Matt. vi. Luke xii. that it is a double sin to Christians to be still so careful and earthly minded; and I know not what to hope for from that man that will not be moved with such words as these from the Lord himself. And yet how many professors have I known that have tormented themselves with cares and sorrows, yea, and cast their bodies into diseases by it, and many of them have died of it, and some it hath brought besides their wits: so observable is that of the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 10. "The sorrow of the world worketh death," even temporal and eternal, unless we be delivered by undeserved grace. Bear all conditions then with an equal mind, and let your passions shew that you are crucified to the world.

4. If you are crucified to the world, then let it not thrust out the service of God, and be made an excuse for a negligence in religion. How rare are holy meditations in the minds of many that think themselves religious? And it is worldly thoughts that thrust them out, and worldly busi-

nesses that are the common excuse. How formal are many in the instructing of their families! How seldom and how coldly do they exhort their children or servants to make ready for death, and make sure of their salvation! How coldly and cursorily are family prayers and other duties slubbered over! And all is because they have other things to mind. The world will give them leave to do no more. The decay of zeal and diligence in family duties is the common symptom, and cause too, of the destruction of knowledge and godliness in the land. And all is because the world is master, and must be served before God. The business of the world doth seem to them the principal business, and must first be done; and all thoughts and talk of heaven must stand by, till the world will give them leave to enter. Men cannot have time to call upon God and instruct their families, because they have their worldly works to do. Go into the families of most noblemen, knights, or gentlemen in England, and see there whether God or the world be most regarded and looked after. Perhaps they may civilly yield an ear while a chaplain makes a short prayer among them: but if you look after heavenly mindedness, and seriousness in religion, and zeal against sin, and diligence to help to save the souls that are under their charge, how little shall you find? Do they earnestly persuade their servants to study holy things? And do they examine them about their everlasting state, and call them to account of what they learn from the public ministry? Do they shew a vehement hatred for sin, and go before their families in a heavenly conversation? Alas! how thin are such families as these! No, no; they are so taken up with entertaining their friends, and pampering their flesh, and in compliments, and in worldly affairs, that they have little time for heavenly work. And if they do for fashion sake get a godly young man to be their chaplain, he is so wearied with the sensual courses of some, and the scorns of others, and the vanity, and worldliness, and negligence of the rest, that his life is a burden to him, and he can no more enjoy himself in such families, than in a fair, or popular tumult. On the other side, poor men are in so much want, that they think themselves sufficiently excused for the neglecting of almost all the means of their salvation. They think necessity lieth upon them, and therefore that God will not require it of them, to understand the

Scriptures, nor to labour after eternal things. Christ telleth them that "One thing is needful," and would have them choose the better part, which shall not be taken from them. But they believe not Christ; but hearken to their flesh, and it telleth them that it is another thing that is needful, and persuadeth them to choose the worser part, which will shortly be taken from them. Christ biddeth them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life;" John vi. 27. But 'venter non habet aures;' the flesh understandeth not such exhortations: a greedy appetite is the reason that it judgeth by. A hungry belly is not filled nor quieted with arguments. They must have their present wants supplied, let what will become of their immortal souls. And thus the rich have so much to look after, that they cannot have while to be diligent for their souls; and the poor have so much to seek after, that they cannot have while; and so the world abuseth them that have it, and that want it: as if two men that had forfeited their lives, were travelling to London for a pardon; and the one goeth so fair a way, that he forgets his business and sitteth down picking flowers in the way; and the other meets with so foul a way, that he thinks he is excused, because he must take heed of being wet or dirtied.

O sirs, if the world be crucified to you, how can it have such power over you, as to cause you to neglect your greatest Lord and your immortal souls? If indeed you are dead to it, and alive to Christ, let it be seen in your families, and be seen in all your duties and conversation. Let the greatest persons that enter into your families, attend the worship of him that is greater, or let them not be attended. Neglect them that will neglect the service of God. Remember that the fourth commandment requireth you to see that the sabbath be sanctified, even by the stranger that is within your gates, as well as by yourselves and the servants that are in your houses. If you have carnal gentlemen at your table, or are at theirs, do not be yourselves so carnal as to be ashamed of holy discourse in their presence, or to suppress any speech that may tend to edification, and to the honour of your Lord. Let them all know that you have greater matters to do, than to attend and honour them, and that you have a Master that must be pleased whoever be displeased.

Take heed also that the world do not cause you to neglect the opportunities which are before you for your own advantage. Miss not a sermon which may be profitable to you without necessity. Miss not the help of private instructions and conference, and other edifying sacred duties, without necessity. Omit not any of your secret addresses to God, without necessity. And take nothing for a necessity, but that which is at that time a greater duty than that which you do omit. I know that works of necessity and mercy may be done even on the Lord's day, and acts of worship may be delayed on such occasions: for God will then have mercy and not sacrifice. But mercy on our own and others' souls, in seeking their relief, must not be neglected for lower things.

And look not only to the matter, but the manner of your duties, that worldliness do not destroy the life and vigour of them. Turn out all thoughts of earthly things when you approach the Lord in holy worship. Provoke not his jealousy by presenting before him a distracted mind, or lifeless carcase. O what sleepy, frozen duties do many professors offer to the Lord, even from week to week, because their hearts are so distracted by the world, that they are to seek when God should have them!

5. If you are crucified to the world, take heed that you use no unlawful means for the procurement of worldly things. Stretch not your consciences for the compassing of such ends. Lay still before you the rule of equity; do as you would be done by. Put your brother with whom you deal in your own case, and yourselves in his; and so drive on your bargains in that mind. If you did thus, you would not sell too dear, nor buy too cheap; you would not make so many words to get his goods for less than the worth, nor to sell your own for more than the worth. Nay, you would not take more than the worth, if by ignorance or necessity your brother should offer it you; nor give less than the worth, though through ignorance or necessity he would take it. The love of money hath so blinded many, that in selling they think it to be no sin to take as much for a commodity as they can get; and in buying they think it not sin to get the commodity as cheap as they can have it; never once asking their own hearts, How would I desire to be dealt with myself, if it were my own case? Nay, covet-

ousness is the common cause that maketh most of the world cry out against covetousness. When men are like ravenous, greedy beasts, that grudge at every bit that goes besides their own mouths, they will reproach all that cross their covetous desires. If they cannot by words persuade a tradesman to sell his ware at such rates as he cannot live by, they will defame him as a covetous, griping man ; and all because he fitteth not their covetous desires : and all that will escape their censure of being covetous, must shut up their shops ere long, to the defrauding of their creditors. If a physician that hath been a means to save their lives, do demand but half his due, it being the calling which he liveth on, they will defame him as covetous, because he contradicteth their covetous desires, and would have any thing from them which is so near to their hearts. Let a minister but demand his own, which was never theirs, but is his by the law of the land, and they will reproach him, like Quakers, as a covetous hireling ; and if he will not suffer every worldly miser to rob him, they will defame him, as if he were sick of their disease. So far are they from the primitive practice of selling all, and laying down at the feet of the apostles, that they would steal from the church those tenths which neither they nor their fathers before them had any propriety in, any more than in the lands of any of their neighbours, as in the case of impropiators they are forced to confess. Let a man give all that he hath to the poor, and he shall be defamed as covetous, because he will not give more than all. For if he give to nineteen, and have not wherewith to satisfy the twentieth, he that hath nothing or less than he expected, is as much unsatisfied, and as forward to speak evil of him, as if he had given to none at all. And usually so unreasonable are these covetous expectations, that you may sooner displease ten of them, than satisfy one.

Whence also comes the thievery, the lying for the sake of commodity, the overwitting and overreaching of each other, but from this sin ? Whence is it that most ale-sellers and vintners will make a trade of poisoning souls, and will nourish that odious vice, which is the ruin of men's bodies, the impoverishing of their families, the dishonour of God, and the shame and danger of the towns and commonwealths in which they are committed, but only for the love of a sor-

did gain? And were it not more for fear of men than God the most of them by far would make the Lord's day their chief market-day; for they care not to rob even God himself, for this unprofitable gain. And it is well if butchers, and many other tradesmen would not do the like, if the laws of the land, and the severity of magistrates did not restrain them. This is the love they have to God and eternal glory. Thus you may see whether they are dead to the world, or rather to Christ. Gehazi thought himself wiser than his master, when he went after Naaman for his prize: and Achan thought himself wiser than all Israel when he hid the gold: and Saul thought it wisdom to spare Agag, and the best things from destruction. But the leprosy taught one, and the stones taught another, and God's rejection taught the third, to know that by experience which they would not learn by the warnings of the Lord. The like may be said of contentious lawsuits, the common effects of covetousness and revenge; and so of all other unlawful gain.

If indeed you are dead to the world, do not so much as tell a lie to get all the riches of the world. Remember also the commands of God, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night:" Levit. xix. 13. And "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified;" 1 Thess. iv. 6. And "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren: know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" 1 Cor. vi. 7—9. These lessons would be better learned, if covetousness did not stop men's ears: but it is a befooling, stupifying vice: it makes men lose themselves for gain. For as Austin saith, '*Avarus antequam lucretur, seipsum perdit; et antequam aliquid capiat, capitur.*' And all this for the pleasing of their fancy, that they may have more than they need. For, '*Avarus est cæcus; credendo enim dives est, non videndo. Amas pecuniam O cæce, quam nunquam videbis, cæcus possides, cæcus moriturus es, &c.*' Idem. And when they pretend necessity, it is but the voice of covetousness: for saith the same Austin,

'Non est in carendo difficultas, nisi cum fuerit in possidendo cupiditas.' Et alibi, 'Pauperiorem se judicat abundans; quia sibi deesse arbitratur, quicquid ab aliis possidetur: toto mundo eget, cujus non capit mundus cupiditatem.'

6. If you are crucified to the world, let us see it by your improving all for God, and not employing it to the pleasing of your flesh.

Use all that you have as men that must be accountable for them. Remember that you receive them from your master for his use. Resolve therefore so to expend and employ them, as may most further his service. Look about you, and see what good is to be done, and then consider, how far you are furnished and enabled to do it; and accordingly lay out the talents which you are entrusted with. Seek after such work; and do not stay till it be brought to your hand. If you love Christ indeed, methinks you should not stay for an invitation to do him service, nor should you need that men come begging to you to awaken your charity, when you know before that it is a charitable and necessary work that is before you.

Two sorts of persons I would especially direct this advice to: First, To the rich and powerful in the world. Secondly, To all that are professors of religion.

For the first sort, let them consider, that their riches are snares to them, and will prove a certain means of their damnation if they devote them not to God. Tithes, and oblations, and first fruits were devoted to God under the law; but all is expressly devoted to him under the Gospel: which was expressed by the primitive Christians selling all, and laying down at the apostles' feet: for as immortality is brought to light more abundantly in the Gospel; so also is the means of obtaining it, and the duty which we owe to him that giveth it. And as grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and the greatest mercies are revealed by the Gospel; so the greatest holiness comes by Christ, and the greatest obligations are laid on us in the Gospel; especially to selfdenial, and a hearty devoting ourselves and all we have to God. I beseech you observe the distinction which Christ useth, (Luke xii. 21.) between laying up riches to yourselves, and being rich to God; and how dreadful the application is. If almost all your riches be expended on yourselves and yours, or laid up in store as for provision for your flesh, it is plain

then that you "lay up riches for yourselves," and so are concluded by the sentence of Christ among the miserable fools that are there described. But if you are rich to God, you will study to improve your riches for God, and often bethink yourselves which way they may be employed to his greatest service. He that cannot spare his wealth for the service of his Redeemer, and the good of his brother, and the furthering of his own salvation, is very far from being crucified to the world.

2. And it is not only the great ones that have need of this advice, but all in their places that are entrusted with God's mercies. Think not yourselves excused from the works of charity, because you have but one talent: for one talent must be proportionably improved as well as ten, or else you will be condemned as unprofitable servants. People of the lower rank do commonly think that God requireth nothing of them, but to receive what others give them, and to labour for themselves; and when they have reviled sufficiently at rich men for worldliness, they often shew themselves as worldly, by denying their mites, and by unmercifulness to those that are poorer than themselves, as the richer do by denying their larger proportions.

The scarcity and defectiveness of charitable works with all sorts of men, from the highest to the lowest, even those that seem more forward in verbal devotions, do shew us too evidently how common hypocrisy is, and how few are entirely devoted to God, and what a bewitching and blinding thing the world is. They that think a man utterly ungodly that doth not in the length and life of his duties go much beyond the common sort of men, do never judge themselves ungodly for not exceeding them in works of charity. In acts of piety and worship, they (justly) think, that they should not only set apart one day in seven to be wholly employed herein, but also a considerable part of every day in the week, besides their holy meditations which they mix with their common works. But how few are they that will allow God such a proportion of their estates, as besides their daily works of charity upon ordinary occasions, to devote also a seventh part entirely to his service! Though all cannot do this, yet many shall see when their eyes are opened, that they should have done more. For aught I see, the charitable works of the richest, and of too many professors of the

greatest piety, are too like the pious actions of the ungodly ; even seldom, and by the halves, and lifeless, and to little purpose. As the ungodly will drop, morning and night, a formal, seeming, heartless prayer, upon the by, while their minds are another way ; and if you urge them to any higher and costlier devotion, instead of obeying they will cavil against it, and put it off with vain excuses, and say, ‘ God doth not require this of us, because we are not learned, and because we have our necessary labours to look after.’ Even so many rich men, and seemingly religious, will drop now and then a penny or an alms to the poor, and give upon the by some inconsiderable pittance, which costeth them but little, and doth no great good ; but if you urge them to any greater works, you will have excuses enough, and reasonings against their duty, but little of performance. Then they have families to provide for, and their estates are but small, and God doth not require this at their hands. I wonder when God will speak so plain, for abounding in good works, as that hypocrites and worldlings will be able to understand him. This voluntary deafness is not remedied by speaking loud ; nor will the common eye-salve cure him that is wilfully blind : he is always an unprofitable scholar that hateth his book. If God had spoken but the hundredth part as much in favour of their worldliness and tenacity, as he hath done against it, they could soon have heard, and easily understood it. If Paul do but tell some covetous persons, that cast their poor widows on the church for maintenance, that were of their near kindred, that “ they are worse than infidels, if they will not provide for their own families, or kindred ;” (1 Tim. v. 8.) these worldlings can find an excuse for their tenacity from such a text as this, which was meant to rebuke it : and when they have driven on a trade of worldliness, and scraped for themselves and children all their lives, and never done any considerable works of charity, they can quiet their consciences by the misapplication and abuse of such a text. They that have money to feed their pride, and revenge, and lusts, have little for God, in any good work : they will sooner spend sixpence in an ale-house than give a groat to the poor. They that have ten, or twenty, or a hundred pounds to spend in a lawsuit for revenge or covetousness, have not half so much to give to charitable uses. They will see all supposed conve-

niences provided for themselves, before they will supply the necessities of others. And what thanks is it to them to shew their poor brethren the charity of a swine, that will leave that to others which he cannot eat himself. And yet there are multitudes that will not use this bestial charity, because their own flesh and posterity are an insatiable gulf, that swallow up all. And what they cannot use, they will lay up for provision, lest their lust should be extinguished for want of fuel; and when their flesh hath had its fill, they may leave the rest behind them, that their children may live in golden fetters, and be gulled of their salvation, and enticed from God as well as they. Is not that man's belly his god, that will bestow a more costly sacrifice on his belly than he will do on God? If God command, and his ministers request, they are most frequently denied. If Christ require it, and his members need, and perhaps crave it, they are denied; but if the back and the belly crave, they are seldom denied. God saith, "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices I am well pleased;" Heb. xiii. 16. And he cannot be heard, nor will they please him at such rates. The flesh saith, "To pamper and provide for me forget not; for with such sacrifices I am well pleased;" and it is quickly heard, and no cost or labour seems too dear. We may see where men's hopes and hearts are, by their adventures. Surely you take that for the chiefest pearl, which you are willing to give the most for! When you can lay out so little upon heaven, and so much upon your flesh, it appears which it is that indeed you most esteem. A pack of belly-gods there be in the world, that will spend more in one year in excess upon themselves, even in gluttony and drunkenness, than they will give in two years to the relief of them that need. Yea, some that would be loath to give in a twelvemonth so much to the poor, as they will spend at one feast in the entertainment of their like; or so much as they will venture on one horse-race, or one game at dice, or cards, or bowls. But these are not they that I have now to deal with; and therefore I shall speak to them in the preface more fully. It is those that confess they have all from God, and that have verbally devoted all to him again, and profess themselves entirely his servants, that I have now in hand. And with such, one would think a few words might serve, to persuade them to

lay down all at his feet, and to give to God the things that are God's. I do not urge you to pine your flesh, nor starve your children, nor to deal unmercifully with either. But consider impartially in the fear of God, whether you make an equal distribution; and when you have cast up what your flesh hath by the year, and what is laid up for the like uses for the future for yourselves and yours, and then what God hath in pious and charitable works, bethink yourselves whether you deal wisely or honestly with him; and whether this which you allow, be all that he this way requireth or expecteth.

But I suppose some ungodly, malicious hearts will make an ill use of all that I say, and will think with themselves, 'This toucheth the professors of religion. They are as covetous as any, and under pretence of long prayers do devour widow's houses; after all their preaching and praying, there are none that are more cruel and close-handed, or ready to overreach and deceive than they; nor any that are more greedy for the things of the world.'

In answer to this objection, I shall first say somewhat to the professors of religion, and then shall speak to the objectors themselves.

1. You that profess the fear of God, take notice I beseech you of this accusation, and though it may shew you cause to pity malicious slanderers, yet let it provoke you to search your hearts and lives, and see that you give not cause for this reproach. As for those worldly, time-serving hypocrites, which in all places creep in among the saints, and do but serve themselves of Christ, let them know that God will one day require an account at their hands, of all these scandals which they have caused in the church, and the ruin of poor ungodly souls that are dashed in pieces, and cast themselves into hell, by stumbling at this stone which their worldly practices have laid before them. If you would needs be worldlings, you were better have kept in the world among worldlings, than to have crept into the church of Christ, and brought thither your scandalous, worldly lives, to the dishonour of that religion which condemneth your practices and you. Did not Christ warn you to count your costs, and never to dream of being his disciples, unless you could forsake all and follow him under the cross, in expectation of a promised treasure in heaven? Is there any thing

that Christ did more peremptorily require of you, than to renounce the world and deny yourselves, if you would be his disciples? And yet will you come without the wedding garment, and bring your base and earthly minds among his servants, and cause his truth, and his house and followers, to bear the reproach of your worldly baseness? I tell you, it is like to cost you dear, that you have cast this dishonour on the name of God, and caused the damnation of the impious reproachers. The wrong you have done to God and men, you shall certainly pay for in everlasting misery, unless a thorough repentance do prevent it. (And I fear it is but a few of these worldly hypocrites that ever truly do repent.) "But woe to them by whom offence cometh. It were good for that man that he had never been born."

2. And as for you that truly fear God, I beseech you let the slanders of wicked men awake you to a holy jealousy of yourselves. You see what their eye is upon. Take heed then how you walk; you hear what it is that offendeth them. As far as is possible avoid all occasions of such offence. Take heed in your bagaining, buying, or selling, how you carry yourselves towards them, and what you say. If all the actions of your lives were right save one, they will reproach you for that one. If you speak but one rash or unhandsome word, they will forget all the rest, and remember that one, and traduce you, as if all were like that one. See therefore that you walk and speak by line and rule. And remember, that it is not an ordinary measure of charity and good works that is expected from you, (according to your abilities) by God and man. "If you love those that love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" "But (saith Christ) I say unto you, love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" Matt. v. 44—47. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" chap. vi. 15. Your actions and words are observed and scanned more than any other men's. For

malice is quick-sighted, and of a strong memory. And you "are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;" chap. v. 14. Take heed therefore that you be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. This will not only stop the mouth of the enemies, but it will also rejoice your teachers in the day of Christ, that they have not run or laboured in vain. Yea, if they were offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, they would rejoice with you all; Phil. ii. 15—17. And for yourselves also it is necessary that you excel others in good works. "For except your righteousness exceed the righteousness even of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. v. 20. Remember that you live among the blind. And if you stumble and fall, you know not how many will fall upon you; and if you break your shins, they that fall upon you may break their necks; and if you rise again you are not sure that they will rise. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims in this world, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the gentiles (the unbelievers and profane), that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. For so is the will of God, that with welldoing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; 1 Pet. ii. 15. Finally brethren, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing;" chap. iii. 8, 9. And so walk, that if any obey not the word, they may yet be won by your exemplary conversation; ver. 1. As you hear more than others, so do more than others, that it may appear you build upon a rock; Matt. vii. 24, 25. And as the book of God is much in your hands and mouth, so remember that "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. For pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their

affliction, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world;" James i. 25. 17.

2. Having said this much to the godly by way of caution ; I shall now make answer to the objectors themselves. You that say, There are none so cruel and so covetous as these that profess themselves so religious ; if you have any moderation left, will you soberly answer me these questions following?

Quest. 1. 'Is it the hearts or the outward actions of these professors that you perceive this covetousness by?' If it be the heart, you are slanderers, and self-idolizers. For the heart is open to none but God ; and will you make yourselves gods, and that when you are playing the part of the devil? This hath been the trick of satan's instruments in all ages. When they are not able to say of the godly, that they are swearers, or drunkards, or adulterers, or stealers, or liars, or slanderers, as they themselves are, they presently go to their hearts, which are out of sight, and say, They are covetous, and proud, and the like. For there they know that none but God is able to justify them. But common reason might also have taught them, that none but God is there able to accuse them. For how know you men's hearts but by their professions, or by their lives?

But if you say it is the life you judge by, I demand what is it in the lives of such men that proves their covetousness? If it be oppressing, deceiving, injustice, or unmercifulness, I would demand of you in the second place?

Quest. 2. 'Is it all or some of them that you thus accuse?' If you know some few to be such, what is that to the rest? But this hath been always the trick of the malignant. If they see one professor fall, or prove a hypocrite, they cry out, 'They are all alike. If you could but see their hearts, they are all such.' Chrysostom and others of the fathers tell us, that this was the use in their days, and no wonder if it be so still. What if there be one Cain in Adam's family? It follows not that Abel or Seth were like him. What if there were one Ham in Noah's ark? will it follow that they were all alike, or that his family was no better than the rest of the world which was drowned? What if there was an Absalom in David's family? What if there was one Judas among the disciples of Christ? Will you say therefore that all the rest were such, or that

Christ's disciples were as bad as others, or his family no better than the rest of the world? But I would further ask you :

Quest. 3. 'Is it the course of their lives that you judge by? or is it some one particular action?' He that is not blind may see, that the course and drift of their lives is less earthly, and more heavenly than other men's. And God judgeth of a man by the scope of his life, and not by one single action; and so must we. The very bent and drift of your lives is worldly. If a man come into your family, what shall he see but worldliness? If one fall into your company, what shall he hear from you but about this? If one observe what you do from year to year, he may see that you lay out yourselves for the world. You cannot refrain upon the Lord's own day, but you are minding it, and talking of it. You savour not any other discourse. The very talk, and labour that is laid out about another world is troublesome to you, and it is this that makes you dislike the godly. You cannot say so of the course of their lives. If once any of them have fallen by temptation into a miscarriage, will you judge of all their lives by that? Do they not lament and bewail it as long as they live after, and avoid it more carefully for the time to come? What if Noah were once drunk in his life, will you judge of his whole life by it, or say that he is as bad as the rest of the world? What if Lot be given over to a temptation? What if Abraham did once tell a lie, or equivocate, and Isaac do the like in a fear? What if Moses did once provoke God? What if David did once commit a heinous sin? Or Peter did deny his Master in his fear? Will you either judge of all other godly people by them? or will you judge of the course of their lives by one action, which they bewail and lament as long as they live? And can you see no difference between a worldly action and a worldly life?

Quest. 4. I would further know of you, 'Whether you have gone to them in love, and admonished them of their sin, when you judged them to be guilty, and heard them speak for themselves?' If not, either you are incompetent judges, or else you draw the guilt upon yourselves, and make the sin your own, as the express commands of God will tell you, in Lev. xix. 17. Matt. xviii. 15. If you have

admonished them and they repent not, why do you not tell the pastors of the church, that they may admonish them, and seek their reformation? This is Christ's order. But you will not, you dare not do this; lest for want of proof, you be proved slanderers, and the shame of your accusations fall upon yourselves. You think that you may whisper behind men's backs, or accuse them in general, without naming any particular fact, and not be proved liars. But this will not hold long.

Quest. 5. Moreover I would know of you, when you accuse men for not being more bountiful in your eyes, 'Do you know of all their works of charity? Are you acquainted with their bestowings?' Sure you are not. For God hath commanded them, Matt. vi. 1—4, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, &c. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thy alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth thee in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." This command they make conscience of; and how then can you be meet judges of their alms?

Quest. 6. Also I would know, 'Are you certainly acquainted with their particular estates? and do you know how able they are to give?' If you do not, you are no competent judges. How oft have I known men reproached for unmercifulness, and for not being more liberal, when they were not able to maintain their families, or to pay every man his own? And yet they that knew not this, did backbite them as covetous.

Quest. 7. Furthermore I would know, 'Are you sure it is not satan within you that prompteth you to these accusations?' Hear my evidence and judge. He is called in Scripture "the accuser of the brethren," (Rev. xii. 10.); and he is described to be a lying, malicious spirit. If therefore it be a lying, malignant, malicious spirit, then certainly it is the spirit of satan.

And we have cause to believe that it is a lying spirit by these evidences following.

1. We find the word of God assuring us that the godly overcome the world, and are such as have laid up their trea-

sure in heaven. And by the rest of their lives, we find the characters of the godly to agree more with them, than with the negligent multitude.

2. We know that their religion condemneth worldliness, and they hear, and read, and speak against it.

3. They only under God do know their own hearts; and they profess themselves contemners of the world, and heirs of a better world. And we find them at least as true of their words in other things, as any other men; and therefore having not forfeited their credit, we are bound to believe them.

4. Especially when we know that you that accuse them, are unacquainted with their hearts.

5. And when we read in the Scripture and church history, that the malignant enemies of Christ and his church have in all ages used the same reproaches against his people from mere prejudice, and the words of others, and the malice of their hearts.

6. And we ourselves do live among them as well as you, and as near them as you. And we see not by them any such thing for which you accuse them. As far as we can judge, it is you that are the worldlings, and their conversation is in heaven; Phil. iii. 20, 21. Excepting some hypocrites that creep in among them, as they ever have done, and will do, into the church, till Christ at judgment shut them out. Moreover we see in the course of their lives, that their speeches are more heavenly than yours, and less of the world. They can spare time from the world to worship God in their families, and instruct those that are under their charge, which you cannot do. We see they take pains for another world through the course of their lives, which you will not do.

8. To conclude, we see by daily experience, that where you give a penny to any good use, we have many from them. I have often wondered at the impudence of blind, malignant persons in this place. I must needs myself bear witness that in divers collections for charitable uses, we have had from those that profess religion, ten shillings, and twenty shillings a man, when we have had from men that are commonly supposed richer, a shilling, or sixpence, or a groat, or not a penny. And I can witness that among them there

are frequent collections for persons in distress at home and abroad, when we never mention them to the rest of the people, as knowing them so worldly that it is in vain; and we should get a scorn from them sooner than a groat, when the persons whom they reproach as covetous, will give many shillings; and that frequently time after time. And for collections at fasts and sacraments, all men may see the difference. I would not have mentioned any of these matters, but that the impudency of calumniators doth in a sort constrain me. For when of my own knowledge we have had this many years more pounds from some of them, than we could have pence from others, for the relief of the poor in voluntary contributions, yet do I frequently hear these worldlings cry out of the covetousness of the professors; as if they had brazed their foreheads, as well as wilfully shut their eyes.

Quest. 8. But yet I would further be informed of you; 'To what end is it that you make this objection?' Is it not with a desire to have a life of holy diligence despised in the world, or thought evil of, or judged needless? Ask your own hearts, and deal sincerely. And if it be so, is not this the very work of the devil, which he hath been doing in all ages against the church, and by which he enticeth souls to hell?

Quest. 9. And I would desire you to tell me, if covetousness be among them, 'Whether you are able to charge it upon their religion or profession?' Do they not witness against it as much as any people in the world? Doth not the Bible which they read cry it down, and threaten damnation to it? Do not the books which they read do so too? Do not the sermons which they hear and repeat, cry it down? Did you ever hear us preach for covetousness? Say so if you can or dare. There is not a greater enemy to covetousness and all other vices in the world, than Christ, and the Gospel, and religion which these men profess. If then there should be covetous ones among them, what is this to religion, which teacheth them to abhor it? Will you blame the best physician and remedies that men are sick, when there is no cure but those remedies? Will you blame clothing or fire that men are cold? or eating and drinking, because men do consume by some disease? I tell

you all men naturally are worldlings; and no man can be cured of that deadly disease but only those that are cured by the religion which these men profess.

Quest. 10. And I pray you tell me, 'Do you think that the works in which they differ from you are good or bad?' Is it good or bad to hear sermons, and repeat them for the help of memory; to pray and praise God together, and to live in the communion of saints, which in your creed you profess to believe? If you have the face to say, This is evil or needless, you must accuse God himself that hath so often commanded it. If it be evil, it is long of God that so urgently requireth it, and not of them. But if you dare not say so, but confess it is good, why then do you not imitate them? What! will you forbear good, because others do evil? Will you sin against God in one kind, if they do so in another? We desire you not to join with them in evil. If they deceive, or lie, or oppress, do not you do so. But will you therefore refuse your duty to God, and therefore destroy your own souls? It is to God and not to them that your duty is necessary. It is God that commandeth it, and God you owe it to. And will you abuse God and rob him, because you have hard conceits of men? Will you abuse him, because you think they do? And who is it that will have the loss of this but yourselves? The Lord hath witnessed that without holiness none shall see God; Heb. xii. 14. And will you neglect a holy life, and shut yourselves out of heaven, and damn your own souls, because you think professors are bad! A wise course indeed! Starve yourselves because professors wear clothes, and famish yourselves because they use to eat! This is a wiser trick of the two, than to neglect or refuse a holy, diligent life, because they use it.

Quest. 11. And if worldliness be so great a sin, I would fain know of you, 'Whether in reason you can think that their course or yours is the way to overcome it.' Dare you say that sitting in an alehouse, or talking of the world, even on the Lord's day, is a better course to overcome the world, than hearing and reading the directions of the word of God, and praying to God for assistance against the sins that they are guilty of? I see them take pains to learn those instructions that should cure them of worldliness, and are glad to fasten them in their memory; and I hear them warn each

other to avoid it; and begging of God that he would destroy all the remnants of it in their souls; and I see others follow the world, and live a careless life, and use none of these means. Which of these shall I think in reason doth take the course to conquer the world?

Quest. 12. Moreover, if these men are as bad as you make them, then sure they are none of the people of God, but a pack of hypocrites; then they are not saints indeed. And then the thing that I would know of you is, 'Which be the saints of God if these be not; and where shall we find them?' I hope you know that God hath his saints on earth, yea that none but saints shall be saved. For it is express in Scripture over and over; Heb. xii. 14. And in many other places. As I said, the communion of the saints is an article of your creed. Tell us then where they are, if these be not they. Will you go to the Quakers, or to the Papists, Monks, and Nuns for them? or whither will you go? Or will you say, that such as you are the saints, that reproach holiness, and refuse to live a holy life? Is idle, worldly discourse a better sign for a saint, than keeping holy the Lord's day, and labouring for salvation? Is ignorance of the Scripture, or neglecting it, a greater sign of a saint, than meditating in it day and night? Read the first Psalm, yea, all the Scripture, and then judge.

Quest. 13. 'Do you think if any of them miscarry, it is because they are too much religious; or rather because they are too little?' Surely it is the latter. For, as I said, their religion severely condemneth covetousness; and therefore if they were more religious, they would be less covetous. And he that is most godly, is least worldly. And ordinarily he that is most ungodly, is most worldly.

Quest. 14. 'Is it not then evident, that other men's sins should move you to be the more religious and careful of yourselves, and not the less?' If you see them stumble, you should look the better to your feet, and not cast yourselves headlong from the rock that you should be built upon. You should think with yourselves, if such men are so faulty for all the pains they take, how much more pains must I take to escape such faults? If they that run so hard shall many of them miss of the prize by coming short, it is a mad conceit of you to think to win it by sitting still, or doing less than they that lost it.

Quest. 15. Lastly, I would advise you to consider ‘Whether God, that justifieth his servants, will suffer you to condemn them?’ And how you can answer the challenge, Rom. viii. 32, 33. And when Christ has shed his blood to absolve them, whether it is likely that he will take it well at them that vilify them? Be it known to the faces of all their enemies, that “The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation;” Psal. cxlix. 4. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him; in those that hope in his mercy;” Psal. cxlvii. 11. “He is nigh to all them that call upon him; to them that call upon him in truth;” Psal. cxlv. 18. “The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes: saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;” Psal. cv. 14, 15. “He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye;” Zech. ii. 8. For all their infirmities, it is dangerous vilifying a people so dear to the God of heaven. They shall shortly hear that joyful voice, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night;” Rev. xii. 10. And they that joined with the accuser in his work, shall be joined with him in the reward; Matt. xxv. 41, 45. The very coming of the Lord to judgment, will be “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe;” 2 Thess. i. 10. And what then will be the doom of those that vilified them whom Christ will be glorified and admired in, you may read and tremble, in ver. 6—9.

But again, I charge you that fear God, that you learn by the accusations of malicious men; and take heed as you love God, yourselves or others, of giving them ground of such reports. And though I know that the wicked are absurd and unreasonable, (2 Thess. iii. 2.) and that you will never be able to stop the mouths of all such men, till grace or judgment stop them; yet see that you walk circumspectly in the evil days, and give no offence to the Jews or Gentiles, or the church of God. If you are Christians indeed, you cannot take the riches or honours of the world to be matters of so much worth or weight, as to be preferred before the honour of your Lord, and the good of souls. It

will grieve you more to hear the reproaches of the ungodly, against the ways and servants of God, than all your wealth will do you good. Doth it not go to your heart to hear poor blinded sinners on all occasions reproaching your holy profession, and saying, 'There are none more proud, and covetous, and unmerciful, than these professors of so much strictness and holiness.' Though for the general, it be a malignant, satanical slander; yet take heed, as you love the honour of God, and of his holy truth and ways, and the souls of men, that you give not occasion of such reproach.

Use: For Consolation and further Persuasion.

Having said this much to you for the crucifying of the world, and the using it as a crucified thing; I shall here briefly enumerate some of the great benefits which follow to yourselves where this is done. And this I shall do in order to these two ends conjunctly. 1. That those to whom the world is crucified may lay to heart the greatness of the mercy, and be thankful to God that hath done so much for them. There is the greater need of encouragement and comfort to the soul, in our crucifixion to the world, because it is a state of so much suffering to the body, and a work that requireth so much selfdenial and patience. Who will be persuaded to cast all overboard, and forsake all the pleasures and profits of this world, but he that knows of somewhat to be got by it that will make him a gainer and saver in the end? No man will incur so great a loss, and cast himself upon a life of troubles, without some considerable benefit to encourage him. And in the conflict the heart will be ready to fail, if we have not a cordial at hand for its refreshment. As Christ himself must have an angel in his agony to comfort him, and when consolation is withdrawn by God, doth feel himself as one forsaken; so all his members in their crucifixion, have need of these reviving messengers of God, that seeing the ends and benefits of their sufferings, they may be able to resign their natural wills in a full submission to the will of God, and so to persevere and conquer in their sufferings. They have need of a believing consideration of the benefits, that they may be daily and hourly furnished against temptations, and may bear those losses and abuses from men, even to laying down of life, and all things in this world which flesh and blood are so exceedingly against. He

that believeth the faithfulness of the promiser, will "hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering;" Heb. x. 23. And he that believeth the recompence of reward will not cast away his confidence; Heb. x. 35. He that knoweth in himself that he hath in heaven a better and more enduring substance, will endure the greatest fight of afflictions, becoming a gazingstock by reproaches and afflictions, and becoming a companion of them that are so used; and will take joyfully the spoiling of his worldly goods; Heb. x. 32—34. He that can "look to Jesus the author and finisher of his faith," and with him "to the joy that is set before him, will endure the cross, and despise the shame, and run with patience the race that is set before him;" Heb. xii. 1, 2. He that by faith foreseeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, will bear the chastisement which for the present seemeth not joyous, but grievous; Heb. xii. 11. All the cloud of witnesses and army of martyrs (Heb. xi.) do testify this to us; that it is faith's beholding the benefits and promised blessings, that must enable us to contemn the world, and suffer the loss of all for Christ. Having therefore need of patience, that after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise, we have need also of these encouraging helps which must support our patience, that in this patience we may possess our souls, when impatient men, to save the world, do lose their souls; Heb. x. 36. Luke xxi. 19. Matt. xvi. 25, 26. These considerations are necessary to us in so hard an undertaking, "lest we be wearied and faint in our minds;" Heb. xii. 3. Though we may manfully bear some few assaults, yet when we feel the vinegar and gall, and the cruelty of the world even piercing not only our hands and our feet, but our very heart, and see them shrink from us that were most obliged to adhere to us, we shall then judge ourselves forsaken of God, if we have not the lively sense of these benefits. As the very thought of forsaking all doth strike a carnal heart with sorrow, and the work doth overmatch all the power of flesh and blood, (Luke xviii. 22—24. 27—29.) so also the believer hath need to keep his faith waking and in exercise, that he "may lift up the hands that else will hang down, and the knees that else will be feeble, and may make straight paths for his feet that the lame may not be turned out of the way, but may be healed;" Heb. xii. 11—14. For if we hear Job's messengers, and

have not Job's faith and patience, we shall not be able heartily to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord;" Job i. 21.

2. My second end in the mentioning these benefits is, that if yet all that is said before have not persuaded you to be crucified to the world, at least you may be persuaded by the consideration of the benefits, and of the happy conditions of those that are thus mortified; even when they seem in the eyes of unbelievers to be most miserable. To these two ends I shall mention the benefits.

Benefit 1. 'Your crucifixion to the world by the cross of Christ will be one of the clearest and surest evidences of your sincerity;' and so may afford you abundant help for the conquering of your doubts, and the ascertaining your salvation. When on the contrary, an unmortified, worldly mind, is the certain and common mark of a miserable hypocrite. I know a melancholy man may be so weary of the world, as to be impatient of his life; but to prefer the Lord and everlasting life before it, in our practical estimation, and resolution, and endeavours, is the very point of saving sincerity, and the specifical nature of true sanctification: and all other marks must be reduced unto this. There is no man so spiritual and heavenly, but while he is here hath a mixture of earthliness and carnality; and many a thousand that are earthly and carnal, have some esteem for God and glory, and some purposes for them, and some endeavours after them; but it is that which is predominant that giveth the denomination. According to that, it is, that we must be called either spiritual and heavenly, or carnal and earthly men.

More particularly, 1. If you look to the understanding, this crucifixion to the world is a very great part of the wisdom of the soul. For wherein doth wisdom more consist, than in judging of things as indeed they are, and especially in matters of greatest moment? He therefore that is crucified to the world, must needs be wise; and whatever his knowledge or reputation may be, he that wants this must needs be a fool. Is that a wise man that knoweth the times and seasons, and how to do this and that in the world, and knoweth not how to escape damnation, nor where his safety and happiness must be sought? And is not he a wiser man that can see the snares that are laid for his soul, and so es-

cape the burning lake ; than he that will sell his Saviour and his soul for a little pleasure to his flesh for a moment ? I make no doubt, but the weakest man or woman that practically knows the vanity of this world, and the desirable excellency of God and glory, is a thousandfold wiser than the most famous princes or learned men that want this knowledge. I will never take that man for a fool, that can hit the way to heaven ; nor that for a wise man, that cannot hit it. It is the greatest matters that try men's wisdom, though childish wit may appear in trifles.

2. To be crucified to the world is the certain effect of a living, effectual faith. The dead faith that James speaketh of, may move you to so much compassion as to say to the poor, " Go in peace ; be warmed and filled ;" James ii. 16. But it will not so far loose you from the world, as to persuade you to part with it to supply his wants : at least you will never be persuaded to part with all and follow Christ, till the belief of a treasure in heaven do persuade you to it ; Luke xviii. 21, 22. Can you say from your hearts, ' Let all go, rather than the love of God.' And in a case of trial, do you certainly find that there is nothing so dear to you, which you cannot part with for God and the hopes of everlasting life ? This is a sign of an effectual faith ; for neither nature nor common grace did ever bring a soul so high.

3. It is also a certain evidence of unfeigned love. For wherein is love so clearly manifested, as in the highest adventures for the person whom we love, and in the costliest expressions of our love when we are called to it ? Then it will appear that you love God indeed, when there is nothing else that you prefer before him, and nothing but what you lay down at his feet ; when the greatest professors that love the world, do shew that the love of the Father is not in them, (1 John ii. 15.) so far as it is loved.

4. To be crucified to the world and alive to God, is the very honesty, and chastity, and justice of the soul. This is your fidelity to God, in keeping the holy covenant that you have made with him in Christ. This is your keeping yourselves unspotted from the world, and undefiled by it : when the friends of it live in its adulterous embracements ; James iv. 4. Thus do you give the Lord his own, even both the creature and your hearts ; when worldlings do unjustly rob him of both. This is the great command and request of God

“My son give me thy heart;” Prov. xxiii. 26. Give him but this, and he will take it as if you gave him all; for indeed the rest will follow this. But if you give the world your hearts, God will take all the rest as nothing.

Benefit 2. The second benefit is this: If you are truly crucified to the world, ‘Your minds will be free for God and his service;’ when the minds of worldlings are like imprisoned, hampered things. What a toilsome thing it is for a man to travel in fetters, or to run a race with a burden on his back? But knock off his fetters, and how easily will he go; and take off his burden, and how lightly will he run! Do you not feel yourselves that the world is the clog of your souls? And this is it that hindereth you in duty, and keepeth you from the attainment of a heavenly conversation? When you should cheerfully go to God in secret, or in your families, the world is ready to pull you back: either it calleth you away by putting some other business into your hands; or else it dulleth and diverteth your affections, so that you have no heart to duty, or no life in it; or else it creepeth into your thoughts in duty, and taketh them off from the work in hand, and makes you do that which you seem not to be doing: and if you shake off these thoughts, and drive them out of your way, they are presently again before you, and meet you at the next turn. But in that measure as you have crucified the world, you are freed from these disturbances. The apostle Peter describeth the miserable estate of apostates, (2 Pet. ii. 20.) to be like a bird or beast that had escaped out of the snare that he was taken in, and after is taken in the same again; having escaped the pollution of the world, &c. *πάλιν ἐμπλακέντες ἡττωνται*, ‘they are again entangled therein:’ as a beast in a snare, that cannot escape or help himself; so (2 Tim. ii. 4.) it is said, no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, *ἵδεις στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται* &c. So that you see that the world is a snare that entangleth men’s souls, and holdeth them as in captivity. The table of the wicked becometh a snare to them, and so do all the bodily mercies which they possess.

But the mortified Christian may look back on all these dangers, and say, “Blessed be the Lord that hath not given us as a prey to their teeth: our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are

escaped ;” Psal. cxxiv. 6, 7. Oh ! with what ease and freedom of mind may you converse with God in holy ordinances, when you are once disentangled from this snare ! Now that which formerly drew off your hearts, and clogged your affections, is crucified and dead : that enemy that kept your souls from God, and was still casting baits or troubles in your way, is dead. As the apostle saith of sin, “ He that is dead is freed from sin ;” (Rom. vi. 7.) so I may say of the world ; he that is dead to the world, in that measure as he is dead to it, is freed from the world. “ Let us therefore lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us ; and then we may run with patience the race that is set before us ;” Heb. xii. 1.

This makes a poor Christian sometimes to live in more content and comfort in the depth of adversity, than he did before in the midst of his prosperity ; because, though his flesh hath lost, his soul hath gained ; though he want the fleshly accommodations which he had, yet the world is now more dead to him than before ; and so his mind is freer for God, and consequently more with him. How blessed a life is it to converse with God with little disturbances and interruptions ! A runner in a race is willing to be rid of his very clothes that should cover him and keep him warm, because they are a burden and hindrance to him in his race ; but the lookers on would be loath to be so stript. Take away prosperity from an unmortified man, and you take away the comfort of his life ; when if the same things be taken from the mortified believer, he loseth but his burden. How readily will that man obey that is dead to the world, when he is commanded to do good, to relieve the poor according to his power, to suffer wrongs, to let go his right, to forgive and requite evil with good, to forsake all and follow Christ ! When to another man these duties are a kind of impossibilities ; and you may as well persuade a lion to become a lamb, or a beast to die willingly by the hand of the butcher, as persuade an unmortified worldling to these things. They think when they hear them, These are hard sayings, who can bear them ? Or at least, they are duties for a Peter or a Paul, and not for such as we. There is a very great part of Christian obedience, that will be easy to you when you are dead to the world, which no man else is able to endure, nor will be persuaded to submit to.

Benefit 3. Another benefit of this crucifixion is this : ‘ The tempter is hereby disarmed, and he is disabled from doing that against you, which with others he can do.’ The living world is the life of temptations. As a bear, for all his strength and fierceness, may be led up and down by the nose, when by a ring the cord is fastened to his flesh ; so the tempter leadeth men captive at his will, by fastening together the world and their flesh. He finds it no hard matter to entice a sensual, worldly mind, to almost any thing that is evil. Bid him lie or steal, and if it be not for shame, or fear of men, he will do it. Bid him neglect God and his worship, and he will do it. Bid him hate those that hinder his commodity, or speak evil of them that cross his desires, or seek revenge of those that he thinks do wrong him herein ; and how quickly will he do it ? The devil may do almost what he list with those that are not crucified to the world. They will follow him up and down the world, from sin to sin, if he have but a golden bait to entice them. But when the world is crucified to you, what hath he to entice you with ? The cord is broken by which he was wont to bind and lead you. Can you entice a wise man by pins and counters, as you may do a child ? If he would draw you from God, he hath nothing to do it with ; for the world, by which he should do it, is now dead. If he would entice you to pride, or ambition, or covetousness, or to sinful means for worldly ends, he hath nothing to do it with ; because the world is dead. The devil hath nothing but a little money, or sensual pleasures, or honours, to hire you with to betray and cast away your souls ; and what cares a mortified man for these ? Will he part with Christ and heaven for money ; who looks on money as other men do on chips or stones ? It is the frame of men’s hearts that is the strength of a temptation. To a man that is in love with money, O what a strong temptation is it, to see an opportunity of getting it by sin ! But what will this move him, that looketh on it as on the dirt of the streets. To a proud man that is tender of his reputation in the world, what a troublesome temptation is it to be reproached, or slighted, or slandered ? and what a dangerous temptation is it to him to be applauded ! But what are these to him that takes the approbation and applauses of the world, but as a blast of wind ? as Christ saith of himself, John xiv. 30. “ The prince of this world

cometh, and hath nothing in me." That is, He cometh to make his last and strongest assault; but he shall find no carnal, sinful matter in me to work upon: and he cometh by his instruments to persecute me to the death; but he shall find no guilt in me, which might make it a glory to him, or a dishonour to me. So in their measure the mortified members of Christ may say, When satan cometh by temptations, the world is dead by which he would tempt them, and he shall find little of that earthly matter in them, to work upon, and to entertain his seed. And therefore when he afterward cometh by persecution, will find the less of that guilt which would be the oil to enlarge and feed these flames. Your innocency and safety lieth much in this mortification.

Benefit 4. Another benefit that followeth our crucifixion of the world, is this: 'It will prevent abundance of needless, unprofitable cost and labour, that other men are at.' You will not be drawn to run and toil for a thing of naught. When other men are riding, and going, and caring, and labouring for a little smoke, or a flying shadow, you will sit, as it were, over them, and discern, and pity, and lament their folly. To see one man rejoice that hath got his prize; and another lament because he cannot get it; and a third in the eager pursuit of it; as if it were for their lives; while they live as if they had forgotten the eternal life which is at hand; will cause you to lift up your soul to his praises, that hath saved you from this dotage. The world worketh on the sensual part first, and thereby corrupteth, and as it were brutifieth our very reason; and the whole course of worldly designs and affairs, even from the glorious actions of kings and commanders, to the daily business of the ploughman and the beggar, are all but the actions of frantic men, or madmen. I say, so far as the affairs of the world are managed by this sensual, unmortified principle, a sanctified believer can look upon them all as on the running or tumult of children or idiots, or on a game at chess, where wit is laid out to little purpose. Mortification will help you to turn your thoughts, and cares, and labours into a more profitable course; so that when the end comes, you will have somewhat to shew that you have gained; when others must complain that they have lost their labour, and worse than lost it. What abundance of precious time do other men

lose, in dreaming pursuits of an empty, deceiving, transitory world, when God hath taken off the poise from you, of such unprofitable motion, and taught you better to employ your time. Many a hundred hours which others cast away upon worldly thoughts, or discourse, or practices, are redeemed by the wise for their everlasting benefit.

Benefit 5. Moreover, this mortification 'Will help you to prevent a great deal of sharp repentance, which must tell unmortified worldlings of their folly.' When they have run themselves out of breath, and abused Christ, and neglected grace, and either lost or hazarded their souls, they must sit down in the end and befool themselves for losing their time and lives for nothing. When God hath given a man but a short life, and laid his everlasting life upon it, and put such works into his hand as call for his utmost wisdom and diligence, what a sad perplexing thought must it be, to consider that all or most of this time hath been cast away upon worldly vanities! If a man shall run away from his own father, and serve a master that at last will turn him off with nothing but shame and blows, will he not wish that he had never seen his face? Such a master all worldlings and sensualists do serve. And he that got most by the world among them, shall wish at last that he had never served it; when the mortified Christian that slighted the world, and laid out his care and labour for a better, may so far escape the bitterness of such repentings, and be glad that he hath chosen the better part. That is not the best that is sweetest in the eating, when afterwards it must be vomited up with pain, because it cannot be digested. The spare diet of mortified men, will prevent such afterpains and troubles.

Benefit 6. Moreover, where the world is crucified, A great deal of self-tormenting care and trouble of mind will be prevented. You will not live such a perplexed, miserable life as worldlings do. Even in your outward troubles you will have less inward trouble of soul, than they have in their abundance. They are like a man that is hanged up in chains alive, that gnaws upon his own flesh awhile, and then must famish. What else do worldlings but tear and devour themselves with cares and sorrows, and scourge themselves with vexatious thoughts and troubles? If others did the hundredth part as much to them, against their wills, as they wilfully do against themselves, they would account

them the cruelest persons in the world. Paul saith of men that are in love with money, that "while they covet after it, they do (not only) err from the faith," but also *ἐαυτοὺς περιέπειραν*, "they pierced themselves through and through," and stabbed their own hearts "with many sorrows." A worldly mind, and a melancholy are some kin. The daily work of both is self-vexation, and they are wilfully set upon the stabbing and destroying themselves. But it is not thus with the believer, so far as he is mortified. Will he vex himself for nothing? Will he be troubled for the loss of that which he disregardeth? The dead world hath not power thus to disquiet his mind, and to toss it up and down in trouble. When it hath power on his body, it cannot reach his soul. As the soul of a dead man feeleth no pain, when the corpse is cut in pieces, or rotteth in the grave; so in a lower measure, the soul of a believer being in a sort as it were separated from the body by faith, and gone before to the heavenly inheritance, is freed from the sense of the calamities of the flesh. So far as we are dead, we are insensible of sufferings.

Benefit 7. Another benefit that followeth upon the former is this, We shall be far better able to suffer for Christ, because that sufferings will be much more easy to us, when once we are truly crucified to the world. What is it that makes men so tender of suffering, and startle at the noise of it, and therefore conform themselves to the times they live in, and venture their souls to save their flesh? but only their overvaluing fleshly things, and not knowing the worth and weight of things everlasting. They have no soul within them but what is become carnal, by a base subjection to the flesh; and therefore they savour nothing but the things of the flesh. All life desireth a suitable food for its sustentation. A carnal life within, hath a carnal appetite, and is most sensible of the miss of carnal commodities; but a spiritual life hath a spiritual appetite. And as carnal minds can easily let go spiritual things; so a spiritual mind, so far as it is such, can easily let go carnal things, when God requireth it. When you are dead to the world, you will easily part with it; for all things below will seem but small matters to you, in comparison of the things which they are put in competition with. If you are scorned, or accounted the

offscouring of the town, you can bear it; because with you it is a very small matter to be judged of man; 1 Cor. iv. 3. If you must endure abuses or persecutions for Christ, you can bear it; because you reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed; Rom. viii. 18. You can let go your gain, and account it loss for Christ; yea, and account all things loss for the knowledge of him; and suffer the loss of all things for him, accounting them but as dung, that you may win him; Phil. iii. 7, 8. If you knew that bonds and afflictions did abide you, yet none of these things would move you, so that you may finish your course with joy; Acts xx. 23, 24. So far as you are dead to the world, and alive to God, it will be thus with you; when they that are alive to the world are so far from being able to die for God, that every cross doth seem a death to them. I have many a time heard such lamentable complaints from people that are fallen into poverty, or disgrace, or some other worldly suffering, that hath given me more cause to lament the misery of their souls than of their bodies. When they take on as if they were quite undone, and had lost their God and hope of heaven, doth it not too plainly shew, that they made the world their God and their heaven?

Benefit 8. Moreover if indeed you are crucified to the world, your hearts will be still open to the motions of the Spirit, and the motions of further grace; and so you will have abundant advantage, both for the exercise and increase of the graces which you have received. The earthly minded have their hearts locked up against all that can be said of them; never can the Spirit or his ministers make a motion to them for their good, but some worldly interest or other doth contradict it, and rise up against it. But what have you to stop your ears when the world is dead? The word then will have free access into your hearts. When the Scripture comes, your thoughts are ready, your affections are at hand; and all are in a posture to entertain him and attend him: and so the work goes on and prospers. But when he comes to the worldly mind, the thoughts are all from home, the affections are abroad and out of the way, and there is nothing for his entertainment, but all in a posture to resist him and gainsay him. O what work would the preaching of the Gospel make in the world, if there were

not a worldly principle within to strive against it! But we speak against men's idols, against their jewels and their treasures, and therefore against their hearts and natures. And then no wonder if we leave them in the jaws of satan, where we found them, till irresistible merciful violence shall rescue them. But so far as you are mortified, the enemy is dead; contradictions are all silenced; opposition is ceased; the Spirit findeth that within, that will befriend its motions, and own its cause; the soul lieth before the word, and gladly hears the voice of Christ: and thus the work goes smoothly on.

Benefit 9. Moreover when once you are crucified to the world, you are capable of the true spiritual use of it, which it was made for. Then you may see God in it; and then you may savour the blood of Christ in it; then you may perceive a great deal of love in it; and that which before was venomous, and did endanger your souls, will now become a help to you, and may be safely handled when the sting is thus taken out. Before it was the road to hell; and now there is some taste of heaven in it. The stones and earth are useful for you to tread upon, though they are unfit for you to feed on, or too hard to rest upon. So though the world be unfit to rest or feed your souls, it may be a convenient way for you to travel in. It is unmeet to be loved, but it is meet to be used, when you have learned so to use it, as not abusing it. When self is thoroughly down and denied, and God is exalted, and your souls brought over so clearly to him, that you are nothing but in him, and would have nothing but in and with him, and do nothing but for him; then you shall be able to see that glory and amiableness in the creature, that now you cannot see; for you shall see the Creator himself in the creature.

Benefit 10. When once you are truly crucified to the world, you will have the honour and the comfort of a heavenly life. Your thoughts will be daily steeped in the celestial delights, when other men's are steeped in gall and vinegar. You will be above with God, when your carnal neighbours converse only with the world. Your thoughts will be higher than their thoughts, and your ways than their ways, as the heaven, where your converse is, is higher than the earth. When you take flight from earth in holy devotions, they may look at you, and wonder at you, but

cannot follow you; for whither you go, they cannot come, till they are such as you. You leave them grovelling here on earth, and feeding on the dust, and striving like children, or rather like swine or dogs, about their meat; when you are above in the Spirit, on the wings of faith and love, beholding that face that perfecteth all that perfectly behold it; and tasting that joy, which fully reconcileth all that fully do enjoy it; which we must here contend for, but none do there contend about it. What a noble employment have you, in comparison of the highest servants of the world? How sweet are your delights in comparison of the epicures! O happy souls that can see so much of your eternal happiness, and reach so near it! Were I but more in your condition, I would not envy princes their glory, nor any sensualists and worldlings their contents, nor desire to be their partner. I could spare them their troublesome dignities and their burdensome riches, and the unwholesome pleasures which they so often surfeit on, and the wind of popular applause which so swelleth them. Yea, what could I not spare them, if I might be more with you? O happy poverty, sickness, or imprisonment, or whatever is called misery by the world, if it be nearer heaven than a sensual life! and if it will but advantage my soul for those contemplations which are the employment of mortified, heavenly men! Yea, if it do but remove the impediments of so sweet a life! I know (by some little, too little experience, I know) that one hour's time of that blessed life, will easily pay for all the cost; and one believing view of God will easily blast the beauty of the world, and shame all those thoughts as the issue of my dotage, that ever gave it a lovely name, or turned mine eye upon it with desire, or caused me once with complacency to behold it, or ever brought it nearer my heart. O sirs, what a noble life may you live! and how much more excellent work might you be employed in, if the world were but dead to you, and the stream of your souls were turned upon God! Had you but one draught of the heavenly consolations, you would thirst no more for the pleasures of the world. Yea, did you but taste of it, as Jonathan the honey from the end of his rod, (1 Sam. xiv. 27.) your eyes would be enlightened, and your hearts revived, and your hands would be strengthened in your spiritual warfare, that your enemies would quickly perceive it, in your more resolute, prevailing oppo-

sition of their assaults. And experience will tell you, that you will no further reach this heavenly life than you are crucified to earth and flesh. God useth to shew himself to the celestial inhabitants, and not to the terrestrial; and therefore you will see no more of God than you get above and converse in heaven. And if faith had not this elevating power, and could not see further than sense can do, we might talk long enough of God before we had any saving knowledge of him, or relish of his goodness. And doubtless, if we must get by faith into heaven, if we will have the reviving sight of God, then we must needs away from earth; for our hearts cannot at once converse in both. Believe it, sirs, God useth to give his heavenly cordials upon an empty stomach, and not to drown them in the mud and dirt of sensuality. When you are most empty of creature delights and love, you are most capable of God. And fasting from the world, doth best prepare you for this heavenly feast. Let abstinence and temperance be imposed upon your senses; but command a total fast to your affections; and try then whether your souls be not fitter to ascend, and whether God will not reveal himself more clearly than before. It may seem a paradox that the vallies should be nearer heaven than the hills, but doubtless Stephen saw more of it than the highpriest; and Lazarus had a fairer prospect thither, from among the dogs at the rich man's gate, than the master of the house had at his plentiful table. And who would not rather have Lazarus's sore with a foresight of heaven, than the rich man's fulness without it; yea, with the fears of after misery? A heavenly life is proper to the mortified.

Benefit 11. Moreover, those that are crucified to the world, are most fruitful unto others, and blessings to all within their reach. They can part with any thing to do good with. They are rich to God and their brethren, if they be rich, and not to themselves. If a mortified man have hundreds or thousands by the year, he hath no more of it for himself than if he had a meaner estate. He takes but necessary food and raiment; he shunneth intemperance and excess. Nay, he often pincheth his body, if needful, that he may tame it, and bring it into subjection to the Spirit; and the rest he lays out for the service of God, so far as he is acquainted with his will. Yea, his necessary food and raiment which he receiveth himself, is ultimately not for

himself, but for God. Even that he may be sustained by his daily bread for his daily duty, and fitted to please his Master that maintaineth him. If they have much, they give plenteously. If they have but little, they are faithful in that little. And if they have not silver and gold, they will give such as they have, where God requireth it.

But the unmortified worldling is like some spreading trees, that by drawing all the nutriment to themselves, and by dropping on the rest, will let no other prosper under them. They draw as much as they can to themselves. For themselves is their care and daily labour; Psal. xlix. 18. They all mind their own things; but not the things of Christ or their brethren. Getting, and having, and keeping is their business; and as swine, are seldom profitable until they die.

Benefit 12. The last benefit that I shall mention is this: If you are now dead to the world, and the world to you, your natural death will be the less grievous to you, when it comes. It will be little or no trouble to you to leave your houses, or lands, or goods; to leave your eating, and drinking, and recreations; or to leave your employments and company in the world; for you are dead to all that is worldly before. Surely so far as the heart is upon God, and taken off these transitory things, it can be no grief to us to leave them and go to God! It is only the remnants of the unmortified flesh, together with the natural evil of death, that maketh death to seem grievous to believers; but so far as they are believers, and dead to the world, the case is otherwise. Death is not near so dreadful to them as it is to others; except as the quality of some disease, or some extraordinary desertion, may change the case. Or as some desperate wicked ones may be insensible of their misery. How bitter is the sight of approaching death, to them that lay up their treasure on earth, and place their happiness in the prosperity of the flesh? To such a fool as Christ describeth, Luke xii. that saith to himself, "Soul take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast enough laid up for many years." How sad must the tidings of death needs be to him that set his heart on earth, and spent his days in providing for the flesh, and never laid up a treasure in heaven, nor made him friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, nor gave diligence in the time of his life to make his calling and election

sure! To a worldly man, that sets not his heart and hopes above, the face of death is unspeakably dreadful. But if we could kill the world before us, and be dead to it now, and alive to God, and with Paul, die daily, it would be a powerful means to abate the terrors, and a certain way to take out the sting, that death might be a sanctified passages into life. So much of the benefits of mortification.

And now what remains, but that you that are mortified believers, receive your consolation, and consider what the Lord hath done for your souls, and give him the praise of so great a mercy. Believe it, it is a thousandfold better to be crucified to the world, than to be advanced to prosperity in it; and to have a heart that is above the world, than to be made the possessor of the world.

And for you that yet are strangers to this mercy, O that the Lord would open your hearts to consider where you are, and what you are doing, and whither you are going, and how the world will use you, and how you are like to come off at last, before you go any further, that you may not make so mad a bargain, as to gain the world and lose your souls. O that you did but thoroughly believe, that it is the only wise and gainful choice to deny your carnal selves, and forsake all and follow Christ, in hope of the heavenly treasure which he hath promised. And let me tell you again, as the way to this, That though melancholy may make you weary of the world, and stoical precepts may restrain your lusts; yet it is only the power of the Holy Ghost, the cross of Christ, the belief of the promise, the love of God, and the hopes of the everlasting invisible glory, that will effectually and savingly crucify you to the world, and the world to you. It is a lesson that never was well taught by any other master but Christ, and you must learn it from him, by his words, ministers, and Spirit in his school, or you will never learn or practise it aright.

THE SECOND PART:

OF THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORYING.

HAVING thus dispatched the first part of my subject, concerning a Christian's Crucifixion to the World, by Christ and his Cross, I come to the second part, concerning the Glorying of a Christian. The Judaizing teachers did glory carnally, even in a carnal worship, and carnal privileges, and in the carnal effects of their doctrine on their proselytes; but Paul, that had more to glory in than they, doth disclaim and renounce all such glorying as theirs, and owneth, and professeth a contrary glorying, even in the cross of Christ and his mortification. The observation to be handled is, that

'True Christians must with abhorrency renounce all Carnal Glorying, and must glory only in the Cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to them, and they unto the world.'

In handling this, I shall briefly shew you,

- I. What is included, or what we may glory in.
- II. What is excluded, or what we may not glory in.

For the former, here are two things expressed in the text, in which a Christian may and must glory.

- I. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- II. Our crucifixion to the world hereby. So that the positive part of the doctrine containeth these two branches, which I shall handle distinctly, before I speak to the negative part.

1. True Christians that are crucified to the world and the world to them, by the cross of Christ, may and must glory therein.

2. Yet so, as that their glorying must be principally in Christ, and their own mortification must be gloried in but as the fruit of his cross.

For the first part, it must be understood with these necessary limitations.

1. As Glorying signifieth a self-ascribing and proud conceit of our own mortification, and is contrary to Christian

self-denial and humility, and glorying in God, so we must take heed of it and abhor it.

2. As Glorying signifieth any outward expression of this inward pride, either by words or deeds, we must also avoid it with abhorrence.

3. So must we also do by all unseasonable, offensive ostentation, which may seem to others to savour of pride, though indeed it proceed from a better cause.

4. But as Glorying signifieth the apprehension of the good of the thing, and our benefit by it, and the due affections of content and joy, and exultation of mind that follow thereupon, thus must a Christian glory in his mortification by the cross of Christ. We commonly call this act a blessing of ourselves in the apprehension of our case. As the carnal, ungodly world do bless themselves in their possessing worldly things, so may a Christian bless himself that he is crucified to them. That is, he may rejoice in it as a great blessing of God, that tendeth to further blessedness.

5. And when we are called to it, we may express to others our glorying herein. But so as that we give the glory to God, and not to our own corrupted wills.

6. And when we are called hereto, we must do it very cautiously, as Paul doth, 1 Cor. iv. 4., "I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified." Signifying that we do it with holy intentions for the good of the hearers, and the honour of God, as he doth, ver. 1, 2. 6. 8. to the end. And 2 Cor. ii. 5, 6, &c. 1 Cor. ix. throughout. 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2, &c. And we must so do it as to confess it is like to folly, it being the custom of proud fools to be boasters of themselves. And so Paul when he is called to mention his privileges, calls it his folly in this sense, 2 Cor. xi. 1. 17. 19. 23. lest others should be encouraged to sinful boasting by his example, if he did not brand it by the way with the note of folly; though it was materially so in him (being the matter that folly is by others expressed in), but formally in the proud.

2. Having told you how we may glory in our own mortification, I shall next give you the proof of the point, that we may so do.

And first it is proved by the example of Paul himself, both here in my text, and in many other places. 2 Cor. v. 11—13. xi. throughout. xii. throughout. ver. 5, 6. "Of such an one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but

in mine infirmities." That is, not in any thing that seemeth to advance me in the eyes of the world, lest it should seem a carnal glorying, or men should be drawn thereby to overvalue me; but in such things as men rather pity or vilify for, even my worldly meanness, and contemptibleness, and sufferings for Christ, though before God these are honourable, and therefore I will not glory in them openly, but secretly as I may do in all other graces. So it followeth: "For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth. But now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me." And so ver. 9—11. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (that is, that my glorying may magnify that power of Christ that is manifest in sustaining me, and not myself); "therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak (that is, in the flesh, and the eye of the world), then I am strong (that is, in the Spirit and the work of Christ). I am become a fool (that is, like a fool) in glorying: ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you; for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." Yea, 1 Cor. ix. 15. he saith, he "had rather die, than any should make his glorying void," concerning his self-denial for the advantage of the Gospel.

2. I also prove it thus. We may and must glory in the blessed effects of the blood of Christ; or else we shall not give him his honour. But our own mortification is one of the blessed effects of the blood or cross of Christ; therefore we may and must glory in it.

3. We may and must glory in the certain tokens of the love of God. But our mortification is one of the certain tokens of the love of God; therefore we may and must glory in it.

4. We may and must glory in Christ dwelling in us; and the effects of his indwelling. For if we may glory in Christ crucified, then also in Christ as our head, to whom we are united, and from whom we receive continual influence and communication of graces; but our own mortification is the certain fruit of Christ dwelling in us; therefore we may glory in it.

5. We may glory in the image of God upon our souls. For as it is our glory, so it is the liveliest representation of

God himself. But our mortification is part of God's image upon us ; therefore we may glory in it.

6. We may glory that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the Spirit of Christ is in us, and we may glory in his fruits and works. But our mortification is a principal fruit of the Spirit, which sheweth that he dwelleth in us ; therefore we may glory in it.

7. There is no doubt but Christians may glory in the cessation of their sin against God, and that as to the dominion of sin, they do not dishonour him by breaking his laws, abusing his Son, his Spirit, and his mercies, as formerly they did. But all this is contained in our mortification ; therefore we may glory in it.

8. No doubt but we may glory in the honour of God, when his wisdom, and goodness, and power are demonstrated, to the confusion of his foes, and the encouragement of his people ; but this is done in the mortification of his saints ; in them he conquereth, and in him that loveth them they are supervictors ; Rom. viii. 37. If we must glorify the workman, as such, then must we also glorify the work. If Moses and all Israel must sing such a song of praise to God for overthrowing Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, much more must we sing his praise that conquereth satan and all our corruptions. And the work itself must be magnified in order to the conqueror's praise. If Deborah must sing God's praises for the conquests of weak men, much more must we for the conquest of the world by faith, and for subduing the powers of darkness to us. There is more of God's love and power seen in the spiritual victories of a poor mortified Christian, that is taken no notice of, or despised in the world, than in the bodily conquests of the famous princes in the world, who most of them perish everlastingly after all, because they are conquered by the world and their own flesh.

Though it be the design of the devil, and the slanderous world, to obscure or vilify the work of grace on the souls of the sanctified, yet must it be the care of believers to counterwork them, and maintain and manifest the lustre of that grace, to the glory of the author. He that magnifieth the cure doth honour the physician ; but he that slighteth or disregardeth it, doth dishonour him. To debase the work of creation is a reproach to the Creator ; yea, to overlook it and not admire and magnify it, is an injury to him ; to vili-

fy the work of the Redeemer is horrible infidelity and ingratitude ; and to slight it, and not to magnify it is damnable. And must it not be so then to vilify or not to magnify the works of the Sanctifier ? Why should it not be our duty to magnify the work of sanctification, as well as the work of creation and redemption ? Especially when it is the end which the others do tend to, and that without which we are incapable of sincere magnifying either creation or redemption.

9. It is certain we may glory in the healing of our diseases, and recovery of our depraved, miserable souls. He that must be sensible of his sin, must needs be sensible of the mercy of the deliverer. It cannot be that we should be obliged to mourn for sin, and yet may not glory in our deliverance from it. Nature itself constraineth us to lament the known unhappiness of our souls, as well as the wounds and calamities of our bodies. And therefore the same nature must needs teach us to rejoice and glory in our spiritual recovery.

10. If we may glory in our remission or justification, then by proportion or parity of reason, we may also glory in our mortification. For both are ours by gift, and neither are deserved by us. But it is past doubt that we may glory in our pardon or justification ; therefore we may also glory in our mortification.

11. Undoubtedly we may glory in the ruin of the enemies of Christ and us. How can a soldier be obliged to fight, and not to glory in the victory or good success ? But our mortification is the ruin of Christ's enemies and ours ; therefore we may glory in it.

12. We may glory in that which tendeth apparently to the good of our brethren, yea, to the common good of church and commonwealth. For he that is bound to love his brother, and the commonwealth, is bound to rejoice and glory in their benefits. But certainly the mortification of every individual member doth tend to the good of each part and of the whole. O how profitably should we converse together, if it were not for this sin ! How peaceable, and edifying, and comfortable would our conversation be to all about us ? We should not then tempt them to sin by our example, nor disturb the peace of families or neighbours, by the distempers of our souls and lives ; nor draw God's judgments on the places where we live ; no wonder if all about

them be the worse for one unmortified man; and if the ship be in sudden danger, till Jonah be cast overboard; or if Israel be dismayed for Achan's sin. And all that are about them may fare the better for a mortified believer. In this respect therefore we must glory in our mortification.

13. It is certainly lawful to glory in that which is the earnest of our heavenly everlasting glory, or a note or evidence of our title to it. For it cannot be, that felicity can be desired as felicity, which is with our highest affections and endeavours, but we must needs glory in that which assureth us that we shall attain it. But our mortification is a certain sign of our title to it, and an earnest of it; and therefore we may justly glory in our mortification.

14. Lastly, it is undoubtedly meet that we glory in that which is pleasing to God our Father. For the pleasing of him is our ultimate end; and the doing of his will is the whole work of our lives. And therefore if we may not glory in that, we may glory in nothing at all. Even Christ's own sacrifice, and merits, and holy life, are therefore to be extolled, because they were fully pleasing unto God; and the full commendation which the Father giveth him was, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" Matt. iii. 17. Now it is certain that God is pleased also with the mortified souls and lives of his people, and that through Christ they are amiable and acceptable to him; 1 Cor. vii. 32. 1 Thess. iv. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Heb. xiii. 16. They walk with God by faith, have this testimony, as Enoch had, "that they please God;" Heb. xi. 5. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight;" 1 John iii. 21, 22. To this end is all our wisdom and knowledge, that we may walk worthy of the Lord, in all wellpleasing, being fruitful in every good work; Col. i. 9, 10. He is not a Christian that rejoiceth not in that which is pleasing to the Lord. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness;" Psal. xi. 7. "And he loveth a cheerful giver;" 2 Cor. ix. 7. And shall we not glory in that which is beloved of God? You see then the truth of the point is most evident.

Use 1. The first Use that we shall make of this part of the observation (before we proceed to the explication of the other parts) is, To inform us of the mistake and injurious dealing

of some misguided ones, commonly called Antinomians, who tell us that we must look at nothing in ourselves, nor fetch comfort from it, and earnestly exclaim against the preachers of the Gospel for teaching men to look at any thing in themselves, and to take comfort from the evidence of their graces, and tell us that we must look to Christ alone; and call all those legal preachers or professors that be not of their mind in this. But you may see by what is said before, that they speak against the clearest, fullest evidence; and that the whole stream of Scripture beareth down their opinion. And therefore it is sad, that when they go against the light of the sun, they should be so confident as to accuse their brethren of darkness, and so rash as to censure them as legalists and ignorant of the righteousness of Christ.

Let us a little distinguish, and all the mists of their accusations will vanish, and the case will be clear. 1. We must distinguish between carnal self which we are called in Scripture to deny, and self as it signifieth our personal being. And this we are commanded in Scripture to love and cherish. For we must love our neighbours but as ourselves, and a man must cherish and love his wife but as his own body, and love her but as himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; Eph. v. 28, 29. 33. And self in the third sense, as taken for renewed self, that certainly none is bound to hate.

Now in the first sense it is true that we must look at nothing in ourselves for comfort; that is, at nothing in our carnal selves. But of self in the other two senses, we must further inquire.

2. We must distinguish between that which is both in ourselves, and of ourselves originally, and that which is in ourselves, but not of ourselves, but of God by Christ; or only of ourselves in subordination to Christ. The former sort we have small reason to glory in, for it is our sin and shame. But the latter we may glory in; for the glory redoundeth to the author.

3. We must distinguish between looking at something in ourselves with a mistaking eye, as judging it meritorious, or to be more our own than it is; and looking at it with a right judgment, and saying of it no more than what is true. In the latter sense we may look at it and glory in it, but not in the former.

4. And we must distinguish between a glorying that is terminated ultimately in ourselves, or is accompanied with any undue ascribing to ourselves; this is no doubt unlawful: and a glorying which tendeth to God and is terminated in him, and giveth no honour to any creature but what God giveth them, and what is in a due appointed order to God's honour. And this glorying is a duty, and by all Christians to be carefully performed.

If any that peruse these lines be tainted with this weak mistake, let them consider, besides what is said before:

1. Is it just or pious that Christ should lose the honour of his mercies, merely because he hath bestowed them on us? Doth that make them no mercies? Or rather make them the greater mercies? Shall his grace be vilified, because he makes thy soul the subject of it? Why then it seems you would have thanked him more to have kept his mercy to himself.

2. Is Christ ever the less Christ, because he dwells in the hearts of believers? Ephes. iii. 17. And will you pretend to honour Christ without you, and deny his honour within you, even because he is within you? Yea, and will pretend that it is for the honour of Christ thus to dishonour him? And tell men that they deny or overlook it, because they admire him within them, as well as without them. If Paul say, "I have laboured more abundantly than they all," and add when he hath done, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me; and by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain;" 1 Cor. xv. 10. Will you tell him that he exalteth himself against grace? No; but he exalteth grace in himself. Paul travailed in birth of the Galatians until Christ was formed in them; Gal. iv. 19. And must not he and they observe and honour Christ in them after all this travail? If we glory that we "are crucified with Christ, and that we live," we always add or understand, "yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, and the life which we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us;" Gal. ii. 20. And is it a dishonour to Christ, to acknowledge him in us, and to say that we live by him?

3. Was it not the very end of Christ's death, to save his people from their sins? (Matt. i. 21.) and to bring them "from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto

God?" Acts xxvi. 18. And did he not "give himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" Tit. ii. 14. Did he not therefore "die for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again?" 2 Cor. v. 15. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men:" to what end? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that henceforth we be no more children," &c. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Abundance of such passages in Scripture do assure us that the holiness of the saints was the end that Christ intended in his death. If therefore you teach men that they must not look at the end, in effect you teach them that they must not look at the means. If they must not rejoice in the fruits of Christ's death, they must not rejoice in his death itself; for in itself considered, his death was not matter of joy, but of sorrow; but it is for the sake of the effects that we must rejoice in it. It is a dishonour to the sufferings and merits of Christ, to obscure or make light of the ends and effects of them. And they that will glorify the blood of Christ, must glorify its effects on the souls of men. Who is it honoureth the physician? he that magnifieth the cure, or he that vilifieth it, or makes nothing of it, as was aforesaid?

4. Doubtless we must observe and glory in that which all the world must observe and glorify God for; and that which will be the matter of our Redeemer's honour at the last day; yea, the magnifying himself therein is the end of his coming. But such is the holiness of the saints. They that "see their good works, must glorify our Father which is in heaven;" Matt. v. 16. "And Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, even because they believed the Gospel;" 2 Thess. i. 10. Read also ver. 11, 12.

5. The holiness of the saints is called their participation

of the divine nature ; (as 2 Pet. i. 4. is commonly expounded, and it seems more agreeable to that which followeth, than to expound it of a relative participation of the Divine nature in Christ without us.) This is given to them that “escape the corruption that is in the world through lust ;” 2 Pet. i. 4. And will you overlook the Divine nature and refuse to honour it, and this on pretence that it is a wrong to Christ ? Take heed lest by your doctrine you make Christ an enemy to God and holiness, who came into the world to do his Father’s will, and to recover sinners by sanctification from the world to God.

6. It is the great sin of the devil and wicked men, to wrong and dishonour Christ in his saints ; and when he himself is out of their reach, they persecute him in his members ; and those that love not and relieve not these, shall be judged as not loving and relieving Christ. It is certainly our duty then to do contrary to them, and to love and admire God’s graces in the saints, and to observe and honour Christ within them.

7. What comfortable use can we make of the promises, if we must not look at those evidences in ourselves that prove our interest in them ? God hath promised, that “if we confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in the heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved ;” Rom. x. “And that he that believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life ;” John iii. 16. If you say with the Papists, that no man can tell whether he be a true believer or not, then you make the promise vain ; for what good will it do any man to know that heaven is promised to believers, if it cannot be known whether we are believers or not ? But if you confess that it may be known, why should we so despise the comfort of the promise, as not to search after and observe the qualification which must evidence that it is ours ? Will you apply this promise to all, or to some, or to none ? If to none, then it is made in vain : if to all, you will deceive the most. I mean if you absolutely promise them the benefit : for it is not all that are believers, nor all that shall have everlasting life. You dare not absolutely tell all men in the world, that they shall not perish. It must needs therefore be the proper benefit of some ; and how will you know, but by the text, who those are ? There is no way of applying it, that the text or common reason will allow of,

but by discerning that we are believers, to conclude thereupon that we shall not perish. If you say that all are bound to believe that they shall not perish, I answer, then most should be bound to believe a falsehood, which cannot be. They are only bound to believe the truth of the Gospel, and accept of Christ as offered therein, and then discerning this faith in themselves, to conclude that they shall be glorified.

8. Should we not observe the lower mercies that we possess, it were great unthankfulness; much more to overlook the special mercies that accompany salvation. We must bless God for the very health and strength of body that is within us; for our understandings and memories; how much more for the graces that are within us?

9. Our mortification is part of our salvation; and our holiness is a beginning of our happiness; and when we come to heaven we shall be perfected herein. If, therefore, we may not take comfort in this, we may not take comfort in heaven itself, which is the perfection of it.

10. Lastly, consider, that sanctification is that mercy that makes us capable of glorifying God for the rest of his mercies, and receiving the comfort of them. An unsanctified man cannot give any honour sincerely to Christ. And may we not observe and glory in that mercy that enableth us to give God the glory of all mercies? Can it be a wrong to Christ, to rejoice in that, without which we can do nothing to wrong him? And to take comfort in that, without which we are incapable of true comfort?

By this time I hope it is evident to you, that it is an injurious dealing against Christ and his saints, for any to reproach them for glorying in God's graces, even that they are crucified to the world, and the world to them.

Use 2. From hence also many disconsolate Christians may see their error, who cannot glory in a mortified state. They can see matter of comfort in a state of exaltation, when they perceive themselves prosper in all that they undertake, and find a present answer of their prayers, and enjoy the sense of the love of God; but to be crucified to the world, and the world to them, doth seem to them but an uncomfortable state, and they cannot see the greatness of the mercy. It is easy to perceive the excellency of those mercies that partake of the ultimate end, and are known by proper fruition, and have nothing in them but pure sweetness and delight; and therefore a state of joy declareth itself; but as for those

mercies that have the nature of a means, whose excellence is in order to their end, and those that have some wholesome bitterness mixed, because they are less grateful to sense, and valued only by faith, therefore we are too prone to overlook their worth, and to neglect the comforts which the consideration of them might afford us, and so to deny God the thanks that are his due. Every sensual man can rejoice in the having and enjoying of outward prosperity; and every Christian can rejoice in the fruition of God, whether in foretaste here, or in fulness hereafter; but to rejoice in the absence of worldly prosperity, in that we are dead to it, and have learned to set light by it; and to rejoice in the absence of God, in that we have hearts that are set upon him, and cannot be satisfied without him, and are desiring after him, and in progress towards him, and hope ere long that we shall be with him; this is the joy that must be expected by believers here on earth.

Though an enjoying foretaste may now and then afford them a feast, yet it is this believing, desiring, seeking joy that must be their ordinary sustentation; and if in this world they have no other, they have cause to be abundantly thankful for this.

To rejoice in the fruition of God, (especially when it is full) is the part of the glorified saints in heaven. To rejoice in the creature, as accommodating their flesh, is the joy of the carnal, unsanctified here on earth, (a remnant of which is in the imperfect saints). To rejoice in mere outward ordinances, and the false conceits of special grace, is the joy of hypocrites and common professors. To be without joy, is the part of some of the ungodly under the terrors of their consciences, and of true Christians that know not their own sincerity, or are under some great desertions of God. To be out of all hope and possibility of joy, is the part of the devil and damned men. But to rejoice in the true mortification of the flesh, and in the holy contempt of worldly things, and in the desires and hopes of the glory to come, this is the part of the saints on the earth, and the present joy that cometh by believing. And this kind of joy is most suitable to our present condition; as fruition is suitable to our heavenly end. The comforts of travellers are not of the same kind with those of a man that is at home. He that is at home would have his wealth about him; but you would not carry your houses with you in your journey, nor would you

divide your cattle with you, or carry all your goods and riches with you. A traveller would have as fair a way as he can get, and as good a guide, and necessaries for his journey, and no more, but all the rest he would have at home, that he may find it when he comes thither. It is his benefit in the way to want no more, and to have no more; for the more he needeth, and hath, the more he must be burdened and troubled. Mark the descriptions of our present blessedness that you find in the Scriptures, and you may see that they consist in our present mortification to things below, and desires and hopes of things to come, rather than in a state of enjoyment here, whether it be of the world or of God. Though still the reason of our blessedness in a mortified estate, is the tendency that it hath to a glorified estate; because it is the way to that; "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" Matt. v. 3. It is not, 'Blessed are the worldly rich;' nor, 'Blessed are the glorified only.' But the reason is, "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" that is, in title, but not in possession, ver. 2. "Blessed are they that mourn:" and why are mourners blessed? "For they shall be comforted." "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full, for you shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," &c. that is, woe to you that place your comfort and felicity in riches, and fulness, and mirth, and the applause of men: yea, though you possess the things you desire, yet woe to you, because you shall miss of the true and durable felicity. Thus also run all the rest of the blessings in Matt. v. "Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake:" that is, when you are so firm in the faith, and so far in love with me, and the heavenly reward, that you can bear all these revilings, and slanders, and persecutions, you are blessed, even when the troubles are upon you. So that you see here, that our present blessedness consisteth in mortification to present things, and hope of future: and from the future the reason of our present blessedness is fetched. "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be

filled : The merciful shall obtain mercy : The pure in heart shall see God : The peacemakers shall be called the children of God : The persecuted shall have the kingdom of heaven." Indeed to the meek it is promised in present, that "they shall inherit the earth;" as Psal. xxxvii. 11. had before said ; that is, it shall afford them accommodations for a traveller, which is all that is desirable in it, or can be expected from it ; for "godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. Yea, moreover there is a special promise to the meek, above those godly persons that are most wanting herein : for their passage through this world to heaven shall ordinarily be more peaceable and quiet to them than other mens : they do not so molest their own minds, and vex themselves ; nor make themselves troubles, nor provoke others against them as the passionate do ; and commonly they are either loved, or pitied, or more easily dealt with by all.

So that you may see throughout the Gospel, that our present blessedness is in mortification and hope, as the way to our future blessedness, which consisteth in fruition. And therefore it is a very great error in believers, when they overlook the blessedness of a mortified state, and can see little in any thing but sensible fruition and rejoicings. When you are low in afflictions and grieved for your corruptions, and fill the ears of God and men with your complaints, though you have not then the joyful sense of God, yet methinks you might easily perceive your mortification. And will that afford you no refreshment ? Do you not feel that you are crucified to the world, and your desires after it are languid and lifeless ? Can you not truly say that the world is crucified to you, and that you look on it but as a carcase ; as an empty, lifeless, and unsatisfactory thing ? Would you not gladly part with it for more of Christ ? Could you not let go credit, and wealth, and friends, so that the kingdom of God might be more advanced within you, and you might live more in the Spirit by a life of faith ? Could you not be content to be poor in the world, so that you might but be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him ? Why do you not then consider what a blessed condition you are in, and that your mortification is a blessed mercy that leadeth to salvation, and as sure a token of the love of God as your most sensible joys ? Did you ever mark and conscionably prac-

tise that command of Christ, Matt. v. 12. to the persecuted, reviled, slandered believers, " Rejoice and be exceeding glad (mark what a frame your Saviour would have you live in), for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." So when you are poor and afflicted, and have hearts that set light by earthly things, in comparison of God and glory, you have cause to rejoice and be exceeding glad, though you live under sufferings; for thus it hath been with the true believers that have gone before you.

2. I come now to the second branch of the observation; which is, that, When believers glory in their own mortification, it must be as it is the fruit of the cross of Christ, that so all their glorying may be principally and ultimately in Christ, and not in themselves.

They must take heed of ascribing the honour to themselves, or of resting in themselves, but all their observation of the graces that are in them must be in pure respect to him that is the fountain and the end, that we may thankfully acknowledge our receivings, and admire the eternal love which did bestow them, and the compassions and merits of our crucified Redeemer, and the powerful operations of his Spirit in our souls, and so may be carried out to love and duty, in the sense of our receivings, and may live to the praises of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

And that you may see how great reason there is for this, and so may be kept from glorying in yourselves, I shall open the cause to you as it lieth both on Christ's part and on ours. What he is to us, and what we are to ourselves.

Consider 1. It was Christ and not we that wrought our deliverance, by the wonderful work of our redemption. Long enough might we have lain in prison before we could have paid the utmost farthing, and long might we have borne the wrath which we deserved, before we could have done any thing to merit or any way procure our deliverance. Had we wept out our eyes, and prayed our hearts out, and never committed sin again, this would not have made satisfaction to God for the sin that was past. Long enough might we have lain in our blood, if this compassionate Redeemer had not taken us up, and undertaken the cure. Had he turned us off to any creature, we had been left helpless. Had we looked on the right hand for some to deliver

us, or on the left, we should have found none. "Besides him there is no Saviour;" Isaiah xliii. 11. Acts iv. 12.

And moreover, the way he hath taken is wonderful. There are unsearchable wonders of love, and wonders of justice, wonders of wisdom, and wonders of power. It is the admiration of angels; the study of all saints, to know the height, and breadth, and length, and depth; and when they have done all, they find that the love of Christ surpasseth knowledge. As all other knowledge of arts, creatures, and languages is nothing in comparison of the knowledge of a crucified Christ, so our knowledge is too narrow to comprehend the greatness, and too dull to reach to the bottom of the mystery of this design of the heavenly love; Eph. iii. 17—19. When Christ hath posed men and angels with wonders in our redemption, and when we have done nothing in it ourselves, it is easy to perceive in whom we should glory.

2. Consider also that it is Christ that God hath advanced to this glory, and it is the magnifying of him that is designed by God, and not of such as you. It is true, that he intendeth to glorify us with Christ, and that in some participation of his glory. But that is not by ascribing merit, and power, and wisdom to us, nor by praising us for that which indeed we have not; but it is by communicating some of the Spirit of Christ unto us, and letting us see the glory of our head. Though we may see the brightness of the sun, and have the comfort of its rays, yet that doth not make us suns ourselves. So though we shall be where Christ is, and behold his glory (John xvii. 24.), and exercise ourselves in his eternal praise, yet all this is but a derived dignity, communicated to us by the aspect of our Lord; and therefore it will not be our work to praise ourselves, but him; Rev. v. 9. "Him hath God advanced to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts v. 31.), "and made him head over all things to the church" (Eph. i. 22.), and "delivered all things into his hand" (1 John xiii.), and "given him all power in heaven and earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18.), and "a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Phil. ii. 9—10.), and "to this end he died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living;" Rom. xiv. 9. So that the exalting of the Redeemer is a more principal end in the work of redemption than our exaltation, and in our's we are passive, receiving the dignity

which from him is communicated to us ; but Christ with his Father is the Fountain and End of his own glory.

3. Consider also, your debasement in condemnation and humiliation is the designed way to the glory of your Redeemer, and in it your own glory. This is his honour, that when the law had condemned you, he absolved you by his ransom ; and when you were dead in trespasses and sins, he quickened you through the riches of mercy and the great love wherewith he loved you ; Eph. ii. 4, 5. You must be sick before he can have the honour of curing you. He will lay you at the feet of God in shame, crying out, " Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thy hired servants." You shall call yourselves " foolish, disobedient, even mad, and the greatest of sinners ;" Titus iii. 3. Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Tim. i. 15. If therefore you begin to glory in yourselves, you contradict the glory of Christ, and consequently hinder the glory you should receive from him. You have but the benefit of receiving his alms, and therefore must stand in the posture of beggars, but it is he and not you that must have the honour of giving it. You must be nothing, that he may be All, or else you will be nothing indeed. You must not live, but Christ in you, or else you will not live indeed ; Gal. ii. 20. You must be found " in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, or works, but the righteousness which is of Christ by faith," or else you will lose yourselves, and your righteousness ; Phil. iii. 9. And thus the just being dead in themselves, must live by faith, but if any be lifted up, his soul is not upright in him ; Hab. ii. 4. Christianity therefore teaches you to glory in Christ, and not in yourselves.

4. Consider, it is Christ and not you, that revived your souls when you were dead in sin, and crucified you to the world, to which you were alive. You might have rotted and stunk in the grave of sin, if he had not called you out. You saw the spectacles of mortality before your eyes, and you could say, ' The world is vain ' before ; but yet lived in your hearts, until power came from Christ to kill it. Words were but wind ; you would never have let go your bone of present worldly pleasure, if Christ had not taken it out of your jaws by shewing you the hopes of greater things. Long might you have heard sermons, and yet have been carnal still, if

his Spirit had not entered into your hearts. Seeing then it is he that hath done the cure, so far as it is done, it is in him that you must glory, and not in yourselves.

5. Consider, if yet he should deal with you according to your deservings, the remnant of your sin would bring you to damnation. If yet he did not hide your nakedness, and by his intercession procure you a daily pardon, you would every day be your own destroyers; nay, you would not be an hour longer out of hell. If he did not bring you before his Father, you could have no access to him in any of your addresses. Your sacrifices would be cast back into your faces as dung, if the merit of his sacrifice made them not accepted. So that by this you may see in whom you must still glory.

6. Now you have a little grace, you cannot keep it of yourselves. Now you are made alive, you cannot keep yourselves alive. If you be not preserved by him that did revive you, and kept by his mighty power to salvation, and if he be not the finisher of your faith, who was the author of it? How speedily, how certainly would you prove apostates, and undo all that hath been so long a doing? If then you stand not on your own legs, but are carried in his arms, you may see in whom it is you should glory.

7. Nay more, if you were left to yourselves, but to resist one temptation, it would bear you down. You now think of many sins with a holy scorn; but the most filthy of those sins would become your pleasure, if you were forsaken by Christ. You now look on whoredom, and gluttony, and drunkenness, and ambition, as dirt and dung; but if Christ should forsake you, this dung would you feed upon, and as dogs you would eat up the most filthy vomit that ever you did disgorge yourselves of, and as swine you would choose that mire for your bed, and rest in it until hell awakened you. By this then you may perceive in whom you should glory.

8. Moreover, without Christ you cannot make use of the grace that he hath given you. The life and comfort of your grace is in the exercise. To draw forth your faith, and love, and joy into an exercise, is the way to increase them, and to shew you experimentally their nature, truth, and worth, and to attain their ends. And without Christ, you will never do this. You may lie as if you were dead, and dry, and withered, if he do but withdraw his quickening influences; for

without him you can do nothing. Judge then by this in whom you should glory.

9. Yea, further, as you cannot do these of yourselves, so neither can you go to Christ yourselves, for strength to do them. You will not so much as move a hand, or lift up your voice to cry for help. For the nature of sin is to make the sinner willing of it, and unwilling to be delivered from it. You would rather God would let you alone, and thus you would continue.

10. Yea more, without Christ you would not so much as understand and be sensible of all this misery and disability in yourselves. You will think yourselves well when you are next the worst, and give no one thanks that would pity or help you. So that lay all this together, and judge in whom it is that you should glory.

11. And indeed, the very nature of all your graces, if you have any, will lead you from a glorying in yourselves to a glorying in Christ. Repentance will lay you low and make you vile in your own eyes, and loathe yourselves for all your abominations; Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Self-denial is a great part of the new creature. Faith leads you out of yourselves to Christ. Love will carry you quite above yourselves to God. And so it is with other graces. To live in Christ, and upon Christ, and to Christ, is the state of all his living members. So far then as you are new creatures, this law is written in your hearts, and I have the less need to teach you this lesson, and persuade you to the practice of it, because you are really taught of God, to glory in Christ and not in yourselves.

12. To conclude, even nature and common reason may teach you that you have little cause to glory in yourselves: for it may wisely tell you that you have nothing of yourselves, and therefore nothing that is originally your own. Who knows not that we have our being, and all the means of our wellbeing, and every thing that is worth the having, from God alone? As nothing could not make itself to be something, so neither can that dependent something uphold itself, or carry on itself unto its end. "What hast thou which thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why shouldst thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. To such poor, empty, unworthy worms as we are, one would think it should be an easy thing to know that we have nothing but what we have of God; for whence

should we have it? "In him we live, and move, and have our being; and of him, and by him, and for him, are all things, and therefore to him must be the praise for ever;" Rom. xi. 36. Not therefore to ourselves, but unto him must we give the glory; Psal. cxv. 1. Though nature cannot lead us to Christ, it may tell us that we are creatures, and have nothing but from the bountiful hand of our Creator. It is therefore against this nature and reason to glory in ourselves.

Use. See then that you abhor all self-advancing thoughts. And receive no doctrine that gives the glory of Christ unto yourselves. They are miserable that are made irreligious by their pride. But they are more miserable, because more incurable, that make themselves a religion by their pride; and frame to themselves both doctrines and devotions, whose tendency and use is to keep alive this devilish sin. You do not believe well, nor repent well, nor pray well, nor do any Christian duty well, if you be not more humble in and after it, than you were before. It is a sad case for a man to preach himself and pray himself into hell, and to strengthen the bonds of sin and satan by his devotions. And yet proud devotions are as ready a way to this as you can devise. If you read, or confer, or preach, or pray, with a mind that is lifted up, and glorieth in itself, you do but serve the devil, with the name of God and his holy ordinances. And therefore we have seen by sad experience, in a multitude of sects, and horrible delusions of late in this land, that none run to such dreadful outrages in sin, nor go so far against the Lord, as proud, self-conceited professors do. As you love your souls, take heed of being conceited of your own understanding or worth, and of being proud of your supposed holiness or abilities. What fearful ends have we seen of such! If indeed thou art a Christian, thou must become as a little child, and learn of Christ to be meek and lowly, and be a servant to all. And lay thyself still at the feet of Christ, as sensible that all the sin is thine, but the good is his, from whom thou didst receive it. Thou canst destroy thyself, but in him is thy help. Thou hast the skill and ability to set thy house on fire, but it is he that must quench it or repair it. Thou art wise to do evil, but thou hast no knowledge to do good, but what he giveth thee. Thou hast the art of stabbing thyself, but not of curing thyself. He must do that for thee, or else it must be undone.

You can snarl, and ravel the state of your own souls, but it is he that must untie the knots which thy folly and carelessness have tied. Thou canst with Jonas raise the storm and cast thyself overboard; but it is he that must provide the whale to receive thee, and bring thee to the land. Remember therefore that though thou be a vessel of mercy, it is the fountain that filleth thee, and not thyself. Thou canst scarce more dishonour thy qualifications, and actions, and consequently thyself, than to say they are thine own, and originally from thyself. For sure all that is thine, and from thee, will be like thee; and therefore must be weak and bad as thou art. Whenever therefore thou gloriest in thy graces, do it but as the beggar glorieth in his alms, that ascribes all to the giver; or as the patient glorieth in his cure, that ascribeth all to God and the physician; or as a condemned rebel doth glory in a pardon, which he ascribeth to the mercy of his prince. I durst not have told you as I did before, of the duty of glorying in your crucifixion to the world, without adding this caution, to tell you whither all must be referred, and how little you are beholden for it to yourselves. Meet every thought of self-exalting with abhorrence, and give it no other entertainment in your souls than you would give the devil himself, who is the father of it. For casting down Christ, will prove the casting down of yourselves, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.

3. I come now to the third and last branch of the observation; viz. that To glory in any thing save the cross of Christ and our crucifixion thereby, is a thing that the soul of a Christian should abhor.

Here I shall shew you what it is that is not excluded from our glorying in these words. And then what it is that is excluded; and conclude with some application.

1. It is none of the apostle's meaning in these words, that we may not glory in God the Father. For his love to the world was the cause of their redemption. And his pleasure and glory is the end of redemption; and was intended by Christ, and must be intended by us. As Justin Martyr saith, he would not have believed in Christ himself, if he had led them to any but the true God, so I may say, Christ had not done the work of Christ, if he had intended any end but God, and had not brought up all to God.

2. When it is said that we must glory only in the cross of Christ, the meaning is not that we must not also glory in

his incarnation, and holy life, and resurrection, and intercession, and every part of his mediatorship ; for the cross is not here put as contradistinct from these ; but all these are implied in his cross, as having their share as well as it, in the work of our salvation.

3. Nor is it the meaning of the apostle, to forbid us to glory in the promise that Christ has made us, and in the glad tidings of the Gospel. For this brings the blessed news to our ears ; this is the joyful sound ; the voice of love ; the charter of our inheritance ; and therefore sweet to all the sons of life.

4. Nor is it any of the apostle's sense, that we may not glory in the Spirit of Christ, as magnifying him for the work of illumination and sanctification. As it was a high sin in Ananias and Sapphira, to lie to the Holy Ghost ; and as it is the unpardonable sin to blaspheme the Holy Ghost ; so it must needs be a great duty to honour and magnify the Holy Ghost. And therefore it should make us tremble to hear some profane men abuse the Holy Ghost in deriding his works, saying, These are the holy brethren ; these are the saints ; these have the Spirit.

5. Nor yet are we forbidden to glory in the effects of the cross of Christ upon us ; for these you find are included in the text, even our crucifixion to the world thereby. And the other effects of it, even our justification, adoption, and the rest may be gloried in, as well as this that is here named, as the apostle doth Rom. viii. 30—33. to the end, yet still referring all to God in Christ.

6. Nor are we forbidden to glory in the helps of our salvation, the ordinances of God, and the means of grace, so we give no more to them than their due, and look at them but as the appointed means of God, that can do nothing but by him.

7. No, nor is it unlawful so far to glory in our teachers, as God hath sent them and qualified them for our good, and as they are the messengers of God, and instruments of the Spirit. So did Cornelius glory in Peter ; Acts x. And when the apostles brought the Gospel to Samaria, there "was great joy in that city ;" chap. viii. 8. And the apostle commandeth the churches "to know them that are over them in the Lord, and submit themselves, and esteem them highly in love for their work's sake ;" 1 Thess. v. 12.

8. Nay, we may glory even in honour, and riches, and other outward things, as they are the effects of the love of

God, and the blood of Christ; and as they reveal God to us, or furnish us for his service, and the relief of his people, and any way further the ends of our holy faith. In a word, we may glory in any thing that is good, as it stands in its due subordination to Christ, ascribing to it no more than belongs to it in the relation, and not separating it in our thoughts or affections from Christ, but carrying all the glory ultimately to God, and making the creature but the means thereto. And thus may we not only praise the physician, but the medicine, the apothecary, the handsome administration, the glass that it is brought in, the silver spoon in which we take it; and all this without any wrong to the physician, or danger of displeasing him, if we respect every thing but as it stands in its own place. So much to shew you what is not excluded.

II. But what is it then that we may not glory in? As I told you in the beginning, not in ourselves, or any creature, as opposite to Christ, or separate from him, or any way pretending to be what it is not, or do what it cannot. But let us enter into some particulars.

1. Have you dignities, and honours, and high places in the world? Do others bow to you, and have you power to crush them or exalt them at your pleasure? Glory not in it as any part of your felicity. A horse is stronger than a man. The great Mogul, and the Turkish emperor, and many another infidel prince, is a thousandfold beyond the greatest of you, in power and earthly dignity; and yet what are they but miserable wretches! Your power will not conquer death, nor keep off sickness, nor keep the stoutest of your carcases from corruption. When a man shall see you gasping for breath, and yielding yourselves prisoners to irresistible death, and closing those eyes that look so haughtily, then who can discern the glory of your greatness? Who then will fear you, or honour, or regard you, further than your deserts, or their interests lead them? Your flatterers will then forsake you, and seek them a new master. When they are winding your carcase, and laying it up for rottenness in the dust, what signs of your power will then appear? Will your corpse have any reverend aspect? How many have been spurned when they were dead, that were bowed to while they were alive? There are many in hell, and there will be for ever, that were greater men than you on earth. The higher you climb, the lower you have to

fall. If the breath of a thousand applaud you now, perhaps a million may reproach you when you are dead. However, it is not the applause of men that will carry you to heaven, or abate the least of your pain in hell. Glory not then in worldly honours or greatness. But rather rejoice that you have enough without all this, in God. How well, thinks the Christian, can I spare all these tedious, troublesome employments, these compliments, these applauses, this sumptuous provision and retinue, and all this stir that they make in the world! How easily can I spare their titles and obeisances! When I look up at them as on the pinnacle of a steeple, I bless myself that I am below them on safer ground. I have more leisure to converse with God in solitude, than they have in a crowd. Rejoice that you neither need nor desire such a state, but find Christ enough for you in a lower condition, and nothing without him enough in the highest. That you are above these empty childish honours, when those that possess them may be enslaved under them. That you have the dignity of a son of God, a member of Christ, and a heir of heaven, and have a heart that can contentedly let other men take the dignities of the earth. It is more to have the world, and the kingdoms and glory of it under your feet, by the spiritual advancement of your souls, than to be the monarch of the world.

2. Have you abundance of earthly riches, and provision for your flesh, so that you want nothing, but have the world at will? Glory not in it, as the least part of your felicity. This will not keep your souls in your bodies, nor take away their guilt, nor open to you the gates of heaven. You may want a drop of water in hell, for all your riches on earth. If you escape that danger, no thanks to your riches. If ever you get to heaven, you must be beholden to Christ to save you from your riches. And when all is done, you will have a harder journey, and a greater load to burden you than others, and will be saved with very much ado. Glory not then in these; but rather glory that you have a taste of higher and sweeter things, which take off your minds, and make you look on these as chips. To have a heart that cares not for wealth or honours, but can rejoice in poverty, and daily reproaches, is a thousand times greater mercy than to have all the wealth and honour of the world.

3. Have you convenient habitations for buildings, and rooms, and walks, and lands, and neighbourhood? Glory

not in them as any of your felicity. They are baits to entice your hearts from God. But rather rejoice that you have a building not made with hands eternal in the heavens, and that you can be contented till you come thither with any thing in the way, and make shift with inconveniencies for a little while. Heaven wants no furniture, nor hath any incumbrances nor inconveniencies. If a winding sheet and coffin be room enough when we are dead, we can endure sure to be somewhat straitened while we are alive, seeing we are dead to the world while we live in it. O what is the most sumptuous palace to the meanest room in our Father's house? The green and flourishing earth in summer, covered with the more glorious spangled firmament, is a goodly structure; but far short of that which the poorest saint shall have with God.

4. Have you comeliness of body? Have you beauty or strength? Glory not in it. It is but warm, well-coloured earth. The smallpox or other sickness can quickly turn your beauty to deformity. If age do not wrinkle it, death will dissolve it. The comeliest and strongest body will shortly be as homely and loathsome a thing as the dirt in the streets, and as the carrion in a ditch. The stoutest youth and the neatest dame must come to this; there is no remedy. And is such a body a thing to be gloried in? No: but glory rather in your assurance of a resurrection; when your mortal bodies shall put on immortality, and your corruptible incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory; and when you shall shine as stars in the firmament of your Father, and be subject to heat and cold, hunger, thirst, and weariness no more: and that in the mean time you can tame this flesh, and use it as a servant, and instead of caring for its inordinate provision, can lay out your care for a more durable substance.

5. Have you comely apparel for the adorning of your bodies? Glory not in it. This is so childish that it is below a man, and therefore so sinful as to be unbeseeming a Christian. The emptiest person may have the best attire. It is not the outside that shews your worth. The philosopher asks the question, Why women are more addicted to look after neat attire? and he answereth, Because nature is conscious of their want of inward worth, it seeks to make it up with somewhat that is borrowed. It may make a man

suspect that somewhat is amiss within, when there needs all this ado without. They are not always the best horses that have the neatest trappings. A fool may be as bravely drest as a wise man: and few but fools and children do admire you, or think you ever the better; but many a one will envy you, and many take you to be the worse. A graceless soul will be but sorrily covered with neat attire. And whatever you hang without, we all know that there is dung and filth within. Paul's shop hath comelier ornaments than these. "Let women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works; learning in silence with all subjection;" 1 Tim. ii. 9. Glory in the whole raiment of the saints, even the righteousness of Christ, lest when you go naked out of the world as you came naked in, your souls should be found naked before a holy, jealous God.

6. Have you health of body, and feel no sickness? Glory not in it. It will last you but a while. Your oil will be spent ere long, and your candle will go out: you must know what pains and death are as well as others. A little cold, or heat, or a thousand accidents may quickly change the case with you. Many that were young and lusty go to their graves, when some that were more likely to have gone before them are left behind: but first or last we must all away. Rather glory in a healthful frame of soul, that Christ hath cured you of your worldliness and pride, of your self-seeking, and passion, and fleshly lusts: for this will be a more durable health than the other.

7. Have you nobility of birth? Are you descended of worshipful or honourable ancestors? Glory not in it. We are all made of one common earth. There is as good blood in the veins of a beggar as of a lord. This is but a remnant of your ancestor's honour. Perhaps the favour of some great men might bestow it on them at first without desert; or it might be the consequent of a little riches, though ill got. However the merit descendeth not to you; and therefore it is little honour that comes that way. That is your chief honour which is most your own, and least borrowed from others. The deserving son of a beggar is more truly honourable than the undeserving son of a lord. Glory rather that you are born again, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit;

not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; the word of God that endureth for ever. Your first birth, how noble soever, makes you but children of wrath, and slaves of satan. But your new birth is the truly honourable birth, which makes you partakers of the Divine nature, the sons of God, the heirs of heaven, and co-heirs with the Lord Jesus. 1 Pet. i. 23. John iii. 6. i. 12. Rom. viii. 17.

8. Have you friends that love you, and are able to countenance you, and are daily tender of you, and helpful to you? Bless God for them; but glory not in man: for "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and withdraweth his heart from the Lord;" Jer. xvii. 5. "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22. Your best friends are uncertain, and quickly lost, and may turn so unkind as to break your hearts. Or if their minds prove constant, their lives are uncertain; and the dearer they were to you, with the greater grief will you lay them in the grave. Or if you fall yourselves into sickness, they will prove but silly comforts to you: they can but look on you, and be sorry for you; but that will not ease your pain, nor succour you. O how much more cause have you to glory in such a friend as Christ, that will save you from sin, and wrath, and hell! In such a friend as God Almighty, that can rebuke your diseases by a word, or make them tend to the cure of your souls; and that will stick to you when others leave you; with whom you must dwell in heaven for ever!

9. Have you the pleasantest meats or drinks that your appetite desires? the easiest lodgings? the easiest lives? the pleasantest recreations or companions? Glory not in them. These are the most desperate bait of the devil, and the common ruin of the world. To take your fill, and please your flesh, and fit your lives to its desires, is the very way to hell, and the property of the slaves of satan. Your sweet-meat will have sour sauce. "If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live;" Rom. viii. 13. You know what became of him, Luke xvi. that "was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared deliciously every day." It is a heavy case to have your portion and all your good things in this life. Rejoice rather that you have conquered the desires of your flesh, and have brought it into subjection; that you are masters of your appetites, and can eat and drink to the

glory of God, and that you can deny your ease, and endure hardness as a soldier of Christ; that you have more pleasant recreations in the ways of life, and sweeter comforts than the flesh can have any: and that you have delights that are more durable, and meat to eat that others know not of. Rejoice that you have conquered the flesh your greatest enemy, and so have escaped the greatest danger. "For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" Rom. viii. 1.

10. Have you the love of your neighbours, and do all men speak well of you? Glory not in it as any of your felicity; for it will be woe to many that are as well spoken of as you. The world is not so wise nor so good, that a man should much rejoice in its good word.

Are they learned men that extol you? Yet do not glory in it. They may boast you into pride and hell, but they cannot add one cubit to the stature of your worth. They see not the state of your soul; and therefore you may be miserable when they have said their best.

Are they godly men that admire you and speak well of you? Yet glory not in it as any certain evidence of your felicity. They speak as they think, and may easily be deceived. They are not your judges. As their hard thoughts cannot condemn you, so their good thoughts or words cannot justify you with God. O glory rather in God's approbation, who knows the heart; to whose judgment it is that you stand or fall, who judgeth not by outward appearance, but in righteousness. If he say, "Well done good and faithful servant," his words will be life to you; but a thousand others may say so, and do you no good at all, but hurt.

11. Are you famous for learning? and have you great parts in knowledge and utterance? Glory not in it as any of your felicity, or evidence thereof. There are more learned men than you in hell. The greatest knowledge of common things hath much sorrow, and sheweth you so much of your ignorance, and what is yet beyond your reach, that it disquiets you the more. Much more may you glory that you know Christ crucified, and that you know your interest in the love of God, and can love him whom you know, without which all your knowledge would make you as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Of all these together, I may say, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Let not the wise man

glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness ;" Jer. ix. 23, 24.

12. Have you spiritual mercies as well as corporal ? Take heed in what respect you glory in them. For example,

(1.) Have you abundant and excellent means of grace ? Have you ministers, and holy ordinances, and Christian communion in the purest order ? Glory in them as God's mercies and helps to higher things : but not as your felicity, or a certain evidence of it. For many are first in these respects, that will be last in respect of life eternal. The greatest fall is from the highest mercies : and many that had the chiefest place in the church, will have the sorest place in hell.

(2.) Have you much understanding in the doctrine of the Gospel ? and are you eminent teachers of it to others ? Glory in it as an opportunity of serving the Lord, and doing and getting good ; but not as a certain evidence of a good estate. For many shall say, " Lord, have we not preached in thy name ?" whom Christ will not own, because they were " workers of iniquity ;" Matt. vii. 22. And " he that knoweth his Master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes ;" Luke xii. 47. But if your love and obedience be answerable to your knowledge, glory rather in that.

(3.) Have you done many works of mercy to others ? Have you given all you have to the poor ? Have you converted many souls ? Are you public mercies to the place where you live ? Give God the glory of so great a mercy. But take heed of giving the glory to yourselves. And take not the outward works alone, so much as for certain evidences of your happiness.

(4.) Have you extraordinary experiences of mercy, and extraordinary feelings of comfort in yourselves ? Rejoice in them as God's mercy ; and give him the glory. But remember that these are no certain evidences of your safe condition. Many have been wonderfully saved from death, that will not be saved from hell. And many large comforts have ended in eternal sorrows.

(5.) Have you a living faith, and a soul abounding in the love of God, and emptied of self in Christian humility, and exercised in holy walkings, and conflicts for Christ, and looking with hope to the joy that is set before you ? What

then shall I say to you? Glory in this blessed work of grace; this image of Christ; this heavenly nature and conversation; and this foretaste and earnest of everlasting life. But sure I need not bid you give not your very graces the glory due to Christ. For this were to prohibit you a contradiction. It is the nature of them all to carry you to Christ, and to cause you to deny yourselves. You cannot exercise these graces, but you must do it. Do I need to desire you that you make not your own faith the matter of that righteousness which must answer the law, when faith itself is a receiving of another for our righteousness? Or need I advise you that you trust not in your love and evangelical obedience, as a satisfaction to God's justice, or the matter of that righteousness which must answer the law; when that love and obedience is nothing else but a love to him and an obedience of him that hath satisfied for us, and is become our righteousness? Do I need to persuade the humble so far as they are humble, not to be proud of their own graces or works? or the self-denying not to glory in themselves? The nature of the new creature, and the anointing that is in you, doth effectually teach you all these things; and you have already learned them. Yet because you are sanctified but in part, you have still need of warning; and therefore I require you, that you objectively abuse not these graces of Christ (for actively you cannot; seeing grace is that, as Austin defineth it, '*qua nemo male unitur*'). Should you think you merit by denying merit? or should you think you have something to glory in with God, because you have denied yourselves and your own worthiness? or should you trust in those acts as the matter of your justification against that law, whose nature is to distrust in all that is your own, and thus to trust in Christ alone; you would be guilty of the most sacrilegious robbing of Christ, and of an impious abuse of the most precious graces, contrary to their nature and ends: and of the most absurd and senseless abuse of your very reason, by palpable contradiction.

To conclude, I now beseech you all, take heed of your glorying, internally and externally. Let the blinded worldling glory that he hath the world; but do you glory that you need it not, and can be without it, and are heirs of a better world. Let sensual wretches glory in the pleasing of the flesh; but do you glory that you are able to deny it its desires, and to please your Lord. Let the deluded, ambitious

ones glory in their honours ; but learn you to pity them in the height of their prosperity, and glory in the durable prerogatives of the saints. Let natural men glory in their health and natural life ; but glory you in a readiness to die, and be with Christ, and in the believing expectations of the life everlasting. Let hypocrites glory in their evading of sufferings ; but do you glory in tribulations and infirmities, and that you are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ. Let Pharisees glory in their superstitions, and ceremonies, and self-righteousness ; but glory you in gospel-simplicity, and in the righteousness of Christ. " Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength ; even to him shall men come," &c. " In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory ;" Isa. xlv. 24, 25. " The nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory ;" Jer. iv. 2. Let the pomp and fulness of a flattering world be the glory of the worldling ; but let the despised humility and hopes of true believers, in the lowest ebb of worldly accommodations, be our greater glory. For " God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen ; and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; that according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord ;" 1 Cor. i. 27—31. And believe this ; as carnal glorying is childish, against our own reason and daily experience, and will shortly make all that used it ashamed ; so the spiritual glorying of the mortified believer, is also rational and manly, and will never make him ashamed, but end in the perfect endless glory. Fix then your resolutions with this mortified apostle : " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."

END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

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